

GLIMPSES OF THE PAST

by

Muriel H. Sanders

In the event of anyone wishing to make reference
to what I have written in the "Family Story"
for the purpose of Publishing a book, must before
doing so, have my permission, or that of my next of kin.

Muriel H. Sanders.

"Nooitgedacht"
18.08.1973

I wish to thank all relatives and friends for any information, encouragement and help, they have kindly given me. Also the various sources too numerous to mention, that have given me inspiration in my effort to write this family story.

Muriel H. Sanders

20.11.1973

I had the opportunity on the 26.06.1973, my 75th birthday anniversary! of visiting Longbridge Deverill in Wiltshire, England, which was the home village of James and Mary Jennens with their young son James, our 1820 settler Forebears.

I saw the lovely old weather-worn church of St. Peter's Anglican Church where the Family must have worshipped.

I found great satisfaction in the thought that I was surely treading on the soil of my forefathers, thanks to the kindness of my son John and his wife who made this possible.

M.H. Sanders

MY THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

IN

TRIBUTE

TO

MY MOTHER

CLIFFORD AUGUSTA HINDS

I THANK YOU FATHER FOR MY MOTHER
FOR ALL THE YEARS WE SPENT TOGETHER
HER CHARACTER OF FINE EXAMPLE,
UNSELFISHNESS, LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING,
QUIET PATIENCE, CONFIDENCE, AND CALM NATURE.
FLOWERS RICH AND RARE AND SMALL,
THESE WERE ALL HER FRIENDS OF BEAUTY,
TRUSTING ALWAYS IN THY MERCY,
I AM RICH IN HAPPY MEMORIES.
HELP ME FATHER NOT TO FAIL,
ALL THESE TEACHINGS AND THE BLESSINGS,
THAT HAVE MADE MY LIFE WORTHWHILE.

MURIEL H. SANDERS

FOR MY CHILDREN
AND
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF MY
FORBEARS
WHO'S COURAGE I HAVE ALWAYS ADMIRED.

FOREWORD

I have often been asked the question "Why don't you write a book"?

Friends and relatives have thought the story of our family would make interesting reading, and that what is still known of them and their happenings should be recorded. The time now seems right for me to do this. It is over a hundred years since my Great Grandparents with their family settled in this part of the country, and a century since our own family acquired the farm "Nooitgedacht" from where I now write this, with its picturesque background of the Magaliesburg Mountain Range in the District of Krugersdorp, Transvaal.

Here the fifth generation is beginning to grow up.

I am of the third generation, and seem to be the link between the present and the future.

I shall therefore endeavour to relate what I know of the family to the best of my ability, making apologies for my shortcomings, and trusting that what I say in the following narrative is correct.

The following letter was written to my Great Grandfather, James Jennings, the 1820 settler, a copy of which is in my possession, having been kindly given to me by a cousin, Willie Hinds of Johannesburg, to whom I am greatly indebted, with thanks.

He is a Grandson of James Jennings.

The information given seems to be authentic, as on checking records of the 1820 settlers, I find that "Richard Ralf" who wrote the letter is listed among the 91 immigrants from Wiltshire, England, who sailed on the steamer "Weymouth" with the Edward Ford Party in company with our Forbears. He claims to have known the family of "Jennens".

I have therefore written my story about them accordingly, trusting that what I say of them is true, concerning parentage and circumstances as stated.

For reference the letter reads :-

*Fort Beaufort
22nd January, 1848*

To Mr. Jennings,

Sir,

At your request of the 20th inst. I send you the following statement of your Parentage which has come within my own knowledge.

The first of your family that I can remember was William Jennens pronounced "Jennings" who died aged near 90 years in 1797 or 8, and was buried at Longbridge, Deverill, Wiltshire, leaving one son named Robert, and one daughter named Rebecca. I do not know nor ever heard of any other issue.

The son Robert only survived his father a few years, dying at the age of about 67 years, leaving one son living named Thomas Jennens who married Alice Rain, who had borne him six children which I knew viz :-

First Sarah, second James, which was your father, third Robert who died at sea at about sixteen years old, Grace, Benjamin, and Hanna who was junior when your father, the above named James Jennens, who married Mary Butcher in 1818, together with myself and others, numbering ten families under the superintendence of Mr. Edward Ford left our native village on the 21st day of December 1819, to emigrate to the Cape of Good Hope.

James Jennens and his wife and having their only child then about a year old, but the above James Jennens was taken ill just after we got on board at Portsmouth when we were about to sail. He was sent to "Hasler" Hospital on or about the 5th day of January 1820 from Spithead, but a gale came on before Mrs. Jennens with her infant son could be taken on shore. They sailed with us, the first account we got of James Jennens after our arrival was, that he died the next day after

he was admitted into the Hospital, which was obtained by his father the late Thomas Jennens applying to the Governor of Hospital for information.

This is the line of your parentage as far as it has come within my personal knowledge or remembrance, and I do hereby certify you James Jennens to be the only son and heir of the late James Jennens and Mary his wife as aforesaid.

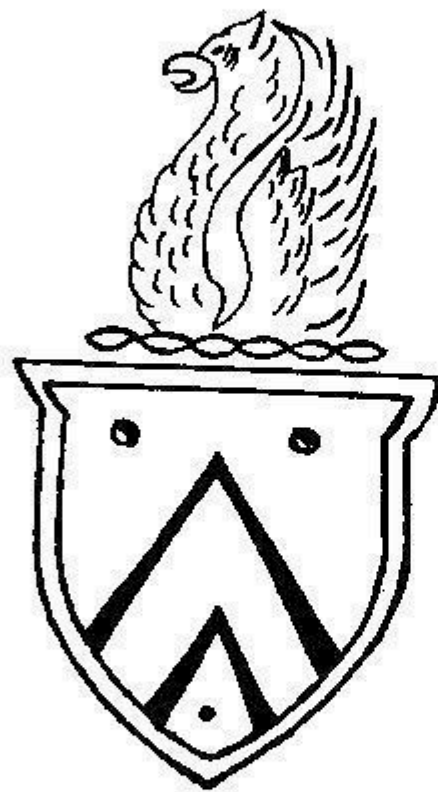
Signed Richard Ralf.

Declared to be this 25th day of January 1858.

Signed I. Stringfellow.

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THE "JENNINGS" CREST

CHAPTER 1

THE BEGINNING OF THE FAMILY SAGA

My Great Grandparents on my mother's father's side were James and Sarah Jennens, this surname was later changed to Jennings. Both were English South Africans. James Jennens was one of the 1820 British Settlers. He was born on the 19th November 1818 at Longbridge, Deverill, in the County of Wiltshire, England, and was an only child. His parents James aged 28 years, and Mary aged 30 years with their young son were one of the ten families who decided to emigrate to the Cape of Good Hope as it was known during the early days.

These courageous people left their native village under the superintendence of Mr. Edward Ford and were known as the "Ford's Party". The date of their departure was 21st December 1819. They boarded the steamer "Weymouth" at Portsmouth. Unfortunately James Jennens Senior was taken seriously ill suddenly and on about the 5th January when arriving at Spithead, it was decided that the family should disembark and James Jennens would be taken to Hasler Hospital. He was taken ashore, and his wife and child intended to follow, when suddenly a terrible gale started which made landing impossible. So mother and son were forced to continue the voyage regardless of Mary's feelings of being separated from her husband, and bound on, on such an adventurous expedition to the unknown hardships of pioneering in Africa. Her small child although a comfort to her, was far too young to have shared her anxiety for her husband's welfare in his illness at Hospital, and the many doubts which must have passed through her mind during that dangerous voyage across the Ocean to an unknown land. Her fellow passengers were sympathetic and kind to the young woman and child James, and she appreciated their company. It may be of interest to mention the fare for each person of the Party amounted to £24.10.3d. for the voyage to South Africa, then the Cape of Good Hope.

They were issued with a blanket each, and a ration of Oats, biscuits and meat. The ration of water each, per day, was three quarts. Before being able to sail, the steamer were moored in the Thames which became iced up, and the January gales were a great handicap to the sailors.

It is claimed that 5,000 English people came to South Africa during the year 1820 as immigrants.

The "Chapman" was the first vessel to bring settlers to the Cape under the Waite Company. These emigrants were in all, three groups, being the Scottish, Irish and English Parties.

The first account received concerning James Jennens reached his wife after their arrival at the Cape of Good Hope.

Thomas Jennens his father had applied for information from the Hasler Hospital Authorities and was notified that "James Jennens had died the next day after he was admitted to the Hospital", so he managed to let Mary know of their sad bereavement and shattered hopes of his son. Mary's sorrow and distress at losing her husband, and father of her young son, can well be understood.

On consideration and kindly advice from her friends she decided to venture forth undaunted with the responsibility of the upbringing of young James, and his future planned according to the hopes they had entertained together as his parents.

On arriving at Algoa Bay, it was found difficult landing for our 1820 Settlers, and was only made possible by the help from Troops and natives wading waist high in water to assist the Passangers and carry the children from the longboats to the shore.

Sir Rufane Donkin was acting Governor of the Cape at the time, and welcomed and assisted these immigrants in every way it is understood.

Mary, and her young son James accompanied her friends, and were amongst those settlers who eventually, after many trying tribulation, reached the Grahamstown District and took up farming. Details of their livelihood are very vague. There James Jennens grew up, and met Sarah Saunders a resident of Port Alfred, and promptly fell in love with her!

Sarah was born at Port Alfred on the 4th November 1821. After a short courtship this young couple were married at Grahamstown during the year 1837, Sarah becoming a bride at the tender age of 15 years! She was laughingly known to remark in later years "That although she had married so young she had never regretted it".

No definite date of Mary Jennens' death is available, but James brought his young wife to live at their residence on the farm "Caarlhoek" in the Grahamstown district. Here they happily lived and farmed for many years.

James and Sarah Jennens had a large family of eleven children, six sons, and five daughters and it was at "Caarlhoek" where their first three sons were born.

The eldest "Jeremiah" arriving on July 25th, 1840. James and Sarah's second son "James William" was born two years later on September 13th, 1842. It is from him whom our family are descended, and I am his Granddaughter.

During this generation the name Jennens was changed to Jennings, and from now on I shall use the latter Surname as known to all the family.

The rest of James And Sarah Jennings' family being my Great Uncles and Aunts were all well known and loved by us all, and each one has an honoured history to their lives, well worth recording. The names of the family are placed in the order they came and were as follows :-

Jeremiah Jennings born at "Caarlhoek" July 25th 1840
 James William Jennings born at "Caarlhoek" September 13th 1842
 John Henry Jennings born at "Caarlhoek" October 4th 1844
 Sarah Jennings born at Tarkar June 7th 1847
 George E. Jennings born at Langdrijkorn Kap Rd. September 20th 1849
 Walter Joseph Jennings born at Tarkar February 5th 1852
 Mary Elizabeth Jennings born at Queenstown November 21st 1854
 Emma Jennings born at Queenstown November 4th 1857
 Alfred Ernest Jennings born at Queenstown November 5th 1860
 Alice Maud Jennings born at Queenstown September 25th 1862
 Ada Jennings born at Blaauwbank Tvl. June 4th 1866.

From these birth records one can only assume as I have no proof of this being authentic that between the years 1844 and 1847 James and Sarah Jennings decided to move up country, and most likely lived for a few years on a farm near Tarkastad before deciding to purchase their farm near the town of Queenstown, Cape Colony as it was known then. They named their farm "Ashby Manor" choosing the name of the property and home of the Jennens family where they had emigrated from in 1819.

It was here that their large family grew up with the exception of Ada the youngest girl, who was born in the Transvaal. While the Jennings family were at "Ashby Manor" they went into business at Queenstown, acquiring a General Dealer's store, known as "Jennings Brothers".

On this same property at the present time there is an Outfitter's Shop known to the public as "Days". Truly a landmark of history connected with our family. The farm is still known by the name "Ashby Manor", but the old homestead the family of Jennings' lived in is practically an extinct ruin now.



*James Jennings 1820 Settler,
And his wife Sarah Jennings
(nee Saunders) in their old age.*

CHAPTER 2

THE TREK TO THE TRANSVAAL

During the year 1863 James and Sarah Jennings decided that they would make their home in the Transvaal, where James had purchased the farm “Blaauwbank” which is situated near the present Magaliesburg Station.

These parents, with their family of sons and daughters, trekked by ox wagon. The one they travelled in was equipped with a suitable tent for shelter for the comfort of the womenfolk.

The journey from the Cape Colony by this method took a great many tedious weeks of hard travelling, which were rough, and they encountered with many unexpected handicaps, and in consequence they were also greatly delayed. These pioneers were accustomed to hardships and bravely face up to all adversities. Provision had to be made before commencing these long treks of securing a suitable stock of foodstuffs for use during the time they would be on the roads, which was not easily calculated.

Rusks which were found to be a good standby were made and baked by the womenfolk in quantities. These, taken with a cup of tea or coffee are very satisfying, and were always considered most essential to the larder while on trek. A substantial supply of stamped mealies and of mealimeal, (The latter an essential commodity for the making of porridge for the family and native driver) was provided. Many other foods which would keep fresh and could be easily prepared were obtained.

A large wooden box most wagons were fitted with, and referred to as the “Wagon box”, this acted as the travellers’ larders, and some were made with small compartments on the one side where small supplies of groceries were kept such as the tea and coffee. Their meat was supplied by the menfolk hunting game en route, which was in plentiful supply and encountered in large herds of various kind throughout the country.

James and his sons had grown up familiar with horses and were all firstclass horsemen, and thoroughly enjoyed the anticipation of any exciting hunt that might be in store for them amongst the herds of buck and other game they had to pass through.

At some of the rivers where they outspanned there was fish available, and they and the natives tried their luck at catching some to vary the monotony of the usual fare. At these Outspans the oxen had to be rested, and grazing and water provided for them and the horses.

Wood was collected for making the camp fires, and the women of the party were busy preparing the meals, and washing their necessary clothing to continue the journey slightly refreshed after the halt. Often the party were faced with many unavoidable discomforts, rivers which had to be crossed were found to be flooded on account of continuous rain. This meant simply waiting until the water had subsided, and it was safe to carry on again. Great was the rejoicing when the native drivers

once again inspanned their teams of oxen, clapped their whips and they were on their way once more.

The journey took the best part of a month, after reaching the Transvaal, this family of "Pioneering Jennings" passed through Johannesburg, which then consisted only of a very few primitive buildings. It is difficult to imagine the vast city we now know as they must have seen it just over one hundred years ago! I have a magazine photograph of the first house built in Johannesburg – a very primitive one!

Eventually James, Sarah and their family reached their destination, and arrived at the farm of James' choice named "Blaauwbank", where they were to make their home and plan a livelihood as best they could in a different part of the Country. One can imagine the joy it must have given them to know that travel worn and tired as they were, at last the long journey was over, and they had come safely without experiencing any illness amongs the family or any other great losses.



BLAAUWBANK HOMESTEAD UNOCCUPIED 1973

CHAPTER 3**BLAAUWBANK**

One cannot describe the farm as having much in the way of beautiful scenery, but it had an accommodating barn shaped house which was adaptable for a large family. The outside doors were of stable type, and the windows all of the old-fashioned shutter type. Floors were those made from mud. Anyhow to James and Sarah and their almost grown up family, it was "Home" in every sense of the word. They were to enjoy many long years of happiness here, and afterwards their children and grandchildren who had shared their feelings lived in the Blaauwbank home for a great many years.

It was at the farm Blaauwbank that a deposit of alluvial gold was discovered during the year 1874. It became famed in the early gold rush days of the Transvaal and many tried their luck with James Jennings' permission at the enterprise.

Two of the eldest sons, Jeremiah and John Jennings worked here as partners for some time. During those early days soon after the family had settled at "Blaauwbank" the men folk had to think of extra means of livelihood, and it was arranged that James, together with his four eldest sons, Jeremiah, William, John and George would go Elephant hunting for the valuable ivory tusks. They intended travelling into the interior of Africa, up as far as the Zambesi Valley, this meant leaving home prepared to be away for three months at least. What preparations there were beforehand to make provision for all that was needed for the long journey.

Their horses and guns required careful selection as well as all other necessary equipment. Hunting suits were made of leather to withstand the hard wear of bush life they anticipated. The womenfolk of the family worked hard to provide adequate foodstuffs for their big trek. The making and baking of rusks with the process of drying these out in large dutch ovens took a considerable time. It was impossible to provide much variety in the food line, but these men were not fastidious, and had been brought up the hard way, being thankful for what was available and were keen sportsmen.

Biltong, which is meat salted and seasoned according to taste, was always plentiful and this, together with dried fruits was nourishing and could be nibbled at frequently while travelling on horseback without having to call a halt for refreshment.

The horses which James and his sons had to take on this and other elephant hunting expeditions, had to be immuned from horsesickness, the disease being very virulent and prevalent at that time. A salted horse was considered a very valuable animal and cost up to £60 and more, each. In later years one of the Jennings brother (my Grandfather William) disposed of some of his Bushveld property for two splendid black stallions which were the pride of his heart.

At last all was ready, and great was the excitement, and the heartaches, when the hunting party set off with wagons well loaded with their requirements, and James Jennings accompanied by his four sons, all on horseback bid farewell to their dear ones at Blaauwbank with encouraging words for their safety, and good health in their absence, and stout hopes for success and adventure for themselves for their pioneering to the unknown territories of Central Africa. They arranged that on their

return journey they would herald their arrival by firing off from the elephant guns from some long distance if all had returned safely and unharmed.

The womenfolk watched as they cantered off on their horses with silent prayers for each. Sarah was now left with the rest of the family and carried out the usual farming operations, and care of the stock with the help of reliable and trustworthy native servants to the best of their ability.

Many were the experiences, often of great danger, these brave hunters were faced with, as they came upon large herds of game of every description, as well as the elephants they had set out to track down to procure the ivory tusks which were so valuable as a means of trade and exchange for other articles they needed.

During one of these expeditions which James and his sons took periodically after succeeding with the first, one of the brothers, George, had a rather terrifying experience with a rhino. He was warned to be on guard as the animals are vicious, but with his youthful curiosity ventured too near so as to have a better view of these interesting creatures and to note their habits.

In a flash George realised he was in grave danger, and was being chased by a rhino, he galloped his horse as fast as ever he could making for one of those large anthills which fortunately there were many of at this particular place. Then raged a fierce battle of "hide and seek" between George and the rhino, and in some miraculous way he managed to make good his escape! Had it not been for the anthill he would most surely have been gored to death! Imagine the mirth and laughter, when relating his experience to his brothers and their telling of what they saw of the incident. It was a standing joke against George for the rest of his life, and he had to put up with a tremendous amount of teasing much to his disgust, whenever any member of the family brought up the subject, much to the delight of all present.

On these trips they came in contact, and often travelled in company with the famous hunter Henry Hartley, with whom they were friendly. In fact Fred Hartley married Sarah Jennings, daughter of Sarah and James during the year 1865. The marriage took place at Blaauwbank and the young couple settled on a farm in the Magaliesburg area about six miles away from the bride's old home.

James Jennings while hunting in Rhodesia spent some days with David Livingstone. He and his four sons only returned home after having shot and secured sufficient elephant tusks to have made their trip to the Zambesi Valley worth while.

Great was the jubilation when the party of hunters arrived back after their long absence. The journey was difficult and although experiences offered great excitement at times, they were tired of travelling, and eager to relax after the strenuous months. What a joyous re-union of family and friends it was, with the happy knowledge that they were safely returned, eager to relate all the adventures they had with the elephants and various other game which the country was teeming with at that time.

The danger and risk of their lives at the mercy of these wild herds was laughingly recorded for the amusement of family and friends very often.

After a good rest these men lost no time in making arrangements to transport the ivory to Natal, once again another big undertaking. It was the sale of the tusks on which they depended a great deal, and also an exchange of goods they were able to procure to barter with.

Firstly, they had to procure teams of good sound oxen, and see that their hooves were shod with iron shoes before setting off, otherwise they became footsore, and unable to do the work expected of them, which would naturally be a great hindrance on the journey. Dependable native drivers had to be found, as to a large extent these natives were solely responsible for the valuable loads, together with the care of the oxen and equipment. These Africans were trained to love their animals, and became excellent drivers. Often their masters entrusted to their charge quite large sums of money for safe keeping on the return journey to the Transvaal after disposing of the goods, and their honesty was proved when they accounted for every penny when it was handed over.

William Jennings (my Grandfather) had two native servants Saul and Simon, who were brothers of whom I was often told. They did his transport of loaded wagons to and from Natal for many years and were well trusted throughout that time. These same servants still lived on the farm Nooitgedacht when I was a young girl. As I remember them then, they were aged with grey hair, and beards mingled with greyness as well.

They were respectful and particularly civil at all times. Their wives and daughters were the domestic servants at the homesteads and the sons herd boys and assistants with the agricultural activities of the farm. This interesting story has been told of James Jennings the 1820 settler.

After he had been resident in the Transvaal for a while, and during one of his travels he was offered the property which is now known as Langlaagte and situated near the city of Johannesburg, for the exchange of eight oxen, and a horse, saddle and bridle. He refused to clench the offer of this business deal remarking that "he thought the price too expensive".

Good oxen for transport were a valuable asset then, and the owners so dependant on them for their work. It would be most interesting to know what the value of the same property is at present time.

CHAPTER 4

HOUSEKEEPING AS THE WOMEN PIONEERS KNEW IT.

The womenfolk shouldered their responsibility bravely, spending very busy lives as so much had to be accomplished by sheer hard work with very few conveniences available. Candles were moulded from tallow and the wicks for these made from any twisted material thought suitable for the purpose.

A friend of mine has one of these old fashioned moulds, as used by her parents, which is an interesting relic of the past.

Boer soap was made for the washing of household linen and clothing, and was indeed a full day's work. A sufficient quantity of fat was collected for this purpose from the slaughtering of pigs, and any other animals at various times, this was carefully stored, and then melted in huge three legged cast iron pots, brought to the boil with slow wood fires underneath. With the help of a native servant, who did the constant stirring necessary, it was less tiring. The housewife decided the proportions for a large cooking, and added caustic soda accordingly. The continued stirring, and testing followed for some considerable time. When it was decided the mixture was of correct consistency, it was left to cool off, and set hard in the cooking pot, generally overnight. The thick bars were cut out the following morning, and left to dry for a considerable time when it would be ready for use.

The quantity of brown lye was also kept, and was excellent for scrubbing purposes.

For the beverage coffee so greatly enjoyed, the whole coffee beans were purchased and roasted in the stove ovens, during which process they had to be constantly stirred to prevent burning. After this, when well cooled off, the coffee beans were milled in small household mills operated by hand when it would be ready for use. The satisfaction of this was that a large tin of ground coffee was the result which lasted a long time.

Bread baking was done in large brick built Dutch ovens outside. A large baking which was undertaken generally once a week. The bread never dried out as it does today with the much refined cake flour we now use. Meal, which was locally milled and grown by the farmer was used for the family's needs and supplied in bulk. The same method applied to the time I was a girl, I still have unpleasant recollections of the experience of scraping out the hot coals and ash from the oven after it had been sufficiently heated from the wood fires, when all would be ready for putting the bread pans in. The bread was delicious! and baked to a niceity, a reward for all the trouble.

Fruit such as peaches, apricots, figs, pears and apples etc. were beautifully sound and luscious, and were preserved and dried in great quantities as they made a valuable addition to the larders. They were kept in strong canvas bags as a rule. The peaches were often peeled in lengths according to the size of the fruit and partially dried, then these would be folded or plaited, and then rolled to form a large roll similar to the old fashioned tobacco rolls which were so popular. When dry, convenient pieces of these dried fruit rolls were cut off and eaten when required. Children delighted in having a piece to nibble at leisure. Indeed a very wholesome fare after the tedious preparation.

Most of the clothing worn was handmade and there were very few sewing machines to be had. What a fine art it was, The “Lady of the House” took such a pride in her needlework, and taught her daughters to do fancywork, and knitting and crocheting as a pastime enjoyment.

Material was of the finest, and “Horrockses Calico” was purchased by the roll of 36 yards, this varying in price from £1.5.0 to £1.10.0 per roll, and was used for various purposes including ladies and children’s underwear which was usually trimmed with handmade edgings of crochet or knitting. It also made excellent pillowslips. The menfolk wore leather jackets for hard wear, and Alpaca material was favoured for best wear. The latter were generally bound with braids. There were also warmer woollen jackets for the cooler weather.

I have reference account books kept during the years 1871 and 1872, giving prices paid for various articles of clothing and commodities. A few of these items as listed may be of interest for comparison with present day prices.

1 Corduroy suit	-	price	£2.15.0
1 Pair trousers	-	“	10.0
1 Flannel shirt	-	“	12.0
1 Woollen Jacket	-	“	£2.10.0
1 Felt Hat	-	“	12.6

Feather and woollen mattresses were used for bedding, the former I thoroughly enjoyed sleeping on, but the woollen ones were seldom comfortable and it was quite an art making the beds look respectable with all the lumps and bumps to arrange in the morning. Bedsteads were mostly of iron, and occasionally in the best homes one saw brass ones or others with brass knobs.

The mud floors were not easy to keep clean, and a method of smearing them with cow dung mixed to a workable consistency with water was found useful for keeping them neat. The native servants seemed to enjoy being engaged in the art of smearing the floors by this method, and used to think out elaborate patterns to decorate the various rooms with, showing their artistic tendency.

An amusing story was told to me, by a member of the family who is married to one of James and Sarah Jennings’ grandsons. She said while they were courting, she happened to be on a visit to Blaauwbank where her fiancée lived with his parents. She wished to give a helping hand with the housework, so tidied his bedroom, and while doing so noticed the mud floor needs smearing the way I have described. Undaunted, and full of youthful energy, and the desire to please, she tackled the not too pleasant occupation herself and obtained a most satisfying result for her labour. The family thought her effort was a great joke, and considered it very plucky of her, no doubt her “Parents to be” decided that their son had made a very good choice for his life’s partner.

I might add that this marriage is a very happy one, and that this couple have already celebrated their “Diamond Wedding” of 60 years and still enjoy good health and companionship.



*The old Blaauwbank-Homestead as it now looks unoccupied (1973).
Standing: Oswald Beresford Jennings, Grandson of Jeremiah Jennings.
Murial Heckford Sanders, Granddaughter of William Jennings.
Both Great Grand Children of James Jennings, 1820 Settler.*

CHAPTER 5**WILLIAM AND MARY JENNINGS**

William Jennings, the second son of James (The 1820 settler) and Sarah Jennings had now reached the age of 24 years, and he had entertained fond hopes for some considerable time, of marrying a young girl he had fallen very much in love with while still resident at Queenstown. He and Mary Reiken had met, and at once felt an attraction for each other. At this time Mary was living with her eldest sister Clara, who was a Mrs. Peter Mitchley, of Molteno, Cape Colony. She had many duties in the household helping her sister generally.

Mary was born at Grahamstown on the 9th December, 1840. She lived with her parents there with her four sisters, Clara, Ziporah, Hannah and Sophie, and her one brother George. Their father was Quarter Master of the Garrison there and did his bit in making history. He had been an Officer in the British Army in India, and was transferred to Africa owing to ill health caused by the hot climate in that country.

This family lost their parents while resident at Grahamstown, also they were bereaved of their brother George, who had suffered a severe back injury sustained from lifting too heavy a weight in connection with a transport wagon while still a young man.

In consequence the five girl had to do the best they could for themselves in the circumstances. All married eventually, and kept in touch with each other throughout the years of their lives.

William Jennings consulted with his parents telling them of his hopes to marry Mary Reiken. It was arranged for him to make the journey to the Colony by wagon, for their marriage to take place there, and for him to bring his bride home to Blaauwbank to live with his parents in the Transvaal.

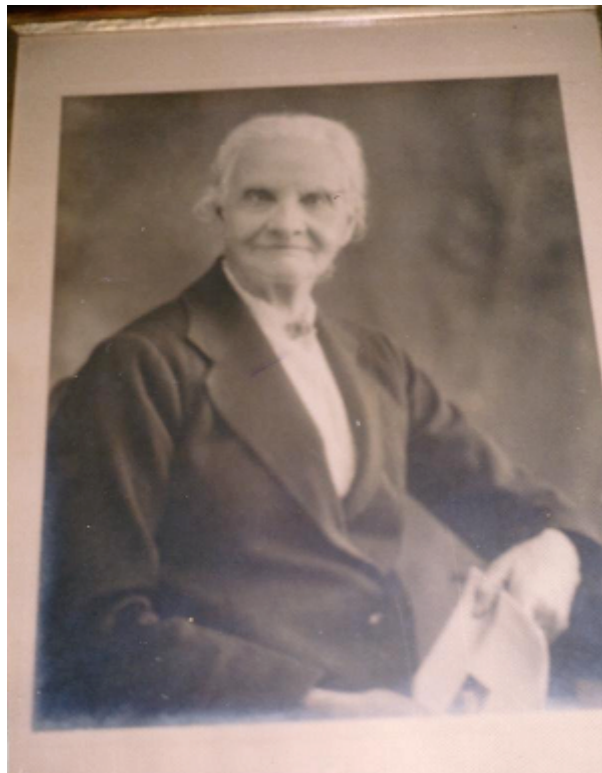
At this time he was not in a position to buy his own farm, although he longingly thought of the time when this might be possible, and he and Mary would have their own home and share so many exciting interests. So handsome young William set off in high spirits at soon seeing Mary, and making plans for future happiness and success.

The journey was tedious, but he pushed on encouraging his native drivers and voorloper cheerily. They were delayed by heavy rain, and swollen rivers had to be crossed which made the trek difficult. With horse riding and the hunting of game for necessary meat for the pot varied the monotony, and at last William arrived at his destination when all hardships endured were forgotten at the joy of meeting Mary again.

Then arrangements had to be made to travel to Queenstown later, where their Anti-Nuptial Contract was to be drawn up. This was signed by William Jennings and Mary Reiken on the 22nd February 1866. The marriage took place during the month of March, the actual date of which I am not certain. Afterwards they soon left Molteno en route on the long ox wagon trek back to the Transvaal.



*William Jennings,
aged 36 years.*



*Mary Jennings (nee Reiken)
aged 84 years, wife of
William Jennings.*

The young bride was a good horse woman and together they set off mounted on the horses William had brought for their comfort and enjoyment. One can picture them bidding farewell to relatives and friends, and riding away out of the town of Molteno, engaged in animated conversation accompanied by mirthful laughter and eagerly making plans for their future welfare and happiness. William had a lovable carefree nature and was full of humour and fun. Mary on the other hand was a girl with a serious, kind and very sensitive nature. Tall and slender in build, with an erect stately figure. A strong face full of character. A true friend, with an understanding sympathy for all she loved. Looking at them together one felt it was a good partnership.

They arrived safely at Blaauwbank after many weeks of hard travelling, and were welcomed by William's parents James and Sarah Jennings with their large family of sons and daughters who at once made Mary feel she was one of the family as well. Before long Mary was sharing the household duties Together with Sarah and her eldest daughters in this friendly home.

Quite a few of the family showed musical and artistic talent, but at this time it was a matter of "do it yourself" as tuition was unobtainable. They managed however to amuse each other with what ever they were able to learn in art, pianoforte and singing.

James and Sarah had a harmonium and the girls would play tunes on this. William was the proud owner of a violin, and entertained himself and the others with the music he was able to produce from it during his leisure hours. He was greatly teased about his practising.

It was at Blaauwbank that my mother Clifford Augusta Jennings was born on October 9th 1867 to William and Mary Jennings. They were delighted with their pretty baby daughter and being the first grandchild in James and Sarah's family there was great rejoicing at her arrival.

Ada, William's youngest sister was only 1 year and 4 months of age when her niece was born. She used to delight in telling her Afrikaans friends "Ek is Tante Ada", and would sit on a chair and ask to be given her baby niece to nurse feeling very grown up at the time.

These two girls grew up together, and were very similar in features and nature generally, and remained great friends during their girlhood and throughout their lives.

A year and eleven months later a second daughter was also born at Blaauwbank on the 15th August 1869. A chubby baby who was affectionately given the pet name of "Tiny" by which she was known to the end of her life. She was christened Sarah Hannah Maude.

During these years James Jennings together with his sons continued to travel to the Zambesi Valley at intervals on elephant hunting expeditions, and it was not until about 1870 or 1871 that they gave up the arduous pursuit of these animals in Rhodesia. They became scarcer, and it was believed that the herds had retreated into the tsetse country. So they gave way to a younger generation. During the latter

trips the Jennings' came in contact with the hunter Selous, and other well known big game hunters of that period.

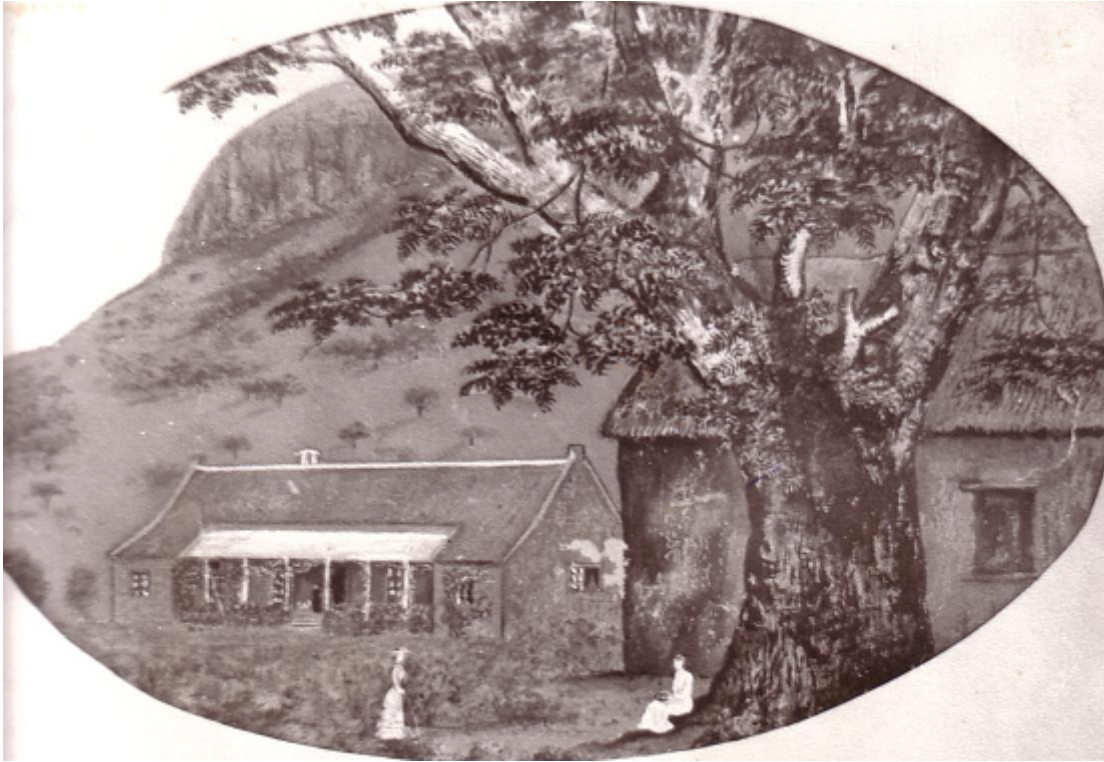
It is amazing that although these men faced countless dangers in their experiences with the large herds of game they daily encountered, they all returned home without sustaining any loss of life or limb. Well trained to have a quick eye and to note the habits of the different species of game is a lesson all hunters have to learn in their own self defence. Reliable guns were a great asset. The women at home none the less valiant, bravely caring for all in their charge during the menfolk's absence.

William and Mary now longed to have a home of their own to bring up their family. It was during the year 1871 that they finally decided to buy a farm of their own. There were two farms available at the time which were fancied by William.

One was the farm Nooitgedacht 121, then in the district of Rustenburg, which lies in a picturesque setting beneath the highest peak of the Magaliesburg mountain range, the height of which is 6,078 ft. above sea level. These mountains were known many many years previously as the "Cashan" mountain range.

The other farm Heuningklip situated in the vicinity of Muldersdrift Hill is nearer the town of Krugersdorp. At present this farm is owned by the Geldenhuys family, who have been resident there for a great many years.

Mary, who was given the choice as to which farm they would purchase decided on Nooitgedacht with as little delay as possible. The purchase of this property was made on the 8th September 1871. The sum paid for it being £1,100.0.0 to the owner Christiaan Hendrik Boshoff. Transfer was taken during Marc 1872 in favour of James William Jennings my grandfather always known as William, and great was the delight this young couple felt when the transaction took place in which all the family shared.



The old Thatched roof house was the first home of William and Mary Jennings and Family when they came to "Nooitgedacht" purchased 8.9.1871.

The house in the background was built by William Jennings later.

*Augusta Jennings sitting under the tree
Sarah Jennings standing
Mary Jennings on Verandah with the dog.*

CHAPTER 6

NOOITGEDACHT

William Hendrik Boshoff had purchased the farm Nooitgedacht from H.J. Potgieter. It was he who had built the very primitive dwelling house of which the farm boasted. It was claimed to be one of the oldest houses in the Transvaal.

Walls were crudely built of raw bricks with a thatched roof. There were openings in the walls for windows, which afforded only a dingy light, and these had wooden shutters. The hooves of small bucks were built into the inside walls which acted as hooks for the hanging of clothing. The homestead was all badly in need of repair when purchased. William and Mary nevertheless decided to move into it at once, prepared to put up with all discomforts as the distance from Blaauwbank to Nooitgedacht was a matter of twelve to fourteen miles. With only the slow means of transport available that of horsedrawn carts, and the oxwagons, it meant great delay would have to be faced, and a lot of time would unduly be spent travelling on the roads if they were not resident on the farm from the start. Besides great was their excitement at the idea of having their own home at long last, however humble it appeared to be.

So no time was lost before William and Mary with their small daughters Augusta and Sarah trekked from Blaauwbank to Nooitgedacht. This farm proved to be "Home" in every sense of the word to each one for the rest of their lives. Mary often described how before it was possible to renovate the thatched roof she would shelter the little girls while asleep with open umbrellas from rain, leaking through at times.

There were rhino horns built into the walls to act as clothes hangers, which seems proof enough that these animals definitely roamed these districts of the Transvaal during those very early days, and were probably shot in the vicinity.

Fruit trees grew in great variety and to perfection. There were orange, lemon, pear, apricot and peach trees, as well as fig hedges, quince and pomegranate, also almond and walnut trees. The St. Helena peach trees grew in profusion, and many varieties of the early peach types were to be found. Well do I remember as a young girl in after years, enjoying my cousins, the luscious fruits picked from these same trees which were laden abundantly.

The old settlers of the country deserve great credit for establishing fruit trees wherever they lived as it was not a case of ordering from nurseries. William and Mary found the fruit a great asset, for besides being wholesome eaten fresh by the family, they were also able to dry the fruit in quantities and then it was stored and used as desired, a standby for the long winter months. Native girls were employed for peeling the fruit, and it was then arranged on frames made from wood and reeds which was generally tied together with riempies, (the latter made from game skins or oxhides tanned and cut in suitable lengths for use). The frames were known to all as "stellasies".

The payment for a days work by native girls was a large basket full of peaches for their own use, with which they were very well satisfied.

If the fruit was only partially dry, and was exposed to a slight shower of rain, the efforts of a days hard work was completely spoilt. The fruit would turn black.

On August 7th 1871, all at Nooitgedacht rejoiced, for William and Mary became the proud parents of a bonny son with the fairest hair, and blue eyes. William had longed for a boy, and now their happiness seemed complete. They named him William Herbert, later the family adopted the pet name of "Sonny" for him. A truly lovely child who grew to be adored by all. Later he delighted in accompanying his father, and indeed, was William's little shadow, more often than not.

Gradually William and Mary improved their home and made it more comfortable and attractive. There was much to do on the farm but with the help of the native families who lived in huts quite near at hand. William was able to build suitable kraals for the stock and acquired a nice herd of cattle by buying from neighbours and attending sales in the district. He also built up a flock of sheep which were useful for slaughtering.

William and Mary had planned for some considerable time that they would build a more comfortable home as soon as it was conveniently possible. So William set about to have bricks made for the building of it, and gradually bought the necessary material required, at Rustenburg.

Tradesmen were employed and with as little delay as possible, building was on the way. The result was a pleasing one, that of a large house with a spacious verandah and rooms larger and comfortable for all. The situation of the new homestead was higher up nearer the mountain than the old house. It commanded a splendid view of the valley of Hekpoort below.

It was considered to be a very fine dwelling at that particular time. William expressed his admiration of the view of the valley at sunset from their front verandah, and after a hard days work would enjoy sitting there together with Mary and the family feeling relaxed, and well satisfied with their progress. Mary had a way of making things look so homely and they entertained hopes of furnishing it more suitably later.

William was particularly fond of animals. His four horses were Sam, Dick, Free State and Wellington. They instinctively knew their master's footsteps when arriving at the stables, and eagerly awaited his cheery voice, with ears pricked up, and eyes alert, ready for the affectionate pat they knew was in store for them, and eager for the piece of coveted bread or some sugar he generally had in his pocket for them.

He enjoyed a quick gallop and he and Mary might often be seen along the unkept roads, or across the veld riding along at leisure. Mary, a pretty sight in her neat habit and seated on a side saddle, with her slender erect body swaying with ease after years of practised horseriding.

Both had a keen watchful eye for any game they might encounter, which most time grazed peacefully, not expecting any intruders in their privacy. Often guineafowl, partridges, and pheasant were disturbed at the sound of their approach, and would fly up in numbers to settle not too far distant as the sound of the horses' hooves trotting along became fainter, as they travelled further away. These wild birds were

at times shot for the table, and gave the family a change in the menu prepared by Mary, in various most appetising ways.

During the winter months it was usual for William to slaughter a suitable animal from his cattle herd, and in this way meat was provided for some months. Provision had to be made for the meat to be preserved. Large wooden casks were used for pickling the various joints and pieces suitable for "salt meat" for use later on. A great deal was minced and turned into sausages which could be air dried. As there was no way of keeping quantities of fresh meat for long, the method of parboiling was done. Very often the family at Blaauwbank consented to take over half an animal to be returned when slaughtered. Biltong was also made in quantity and used freely. The children were particularly fond of this, and were often seen with a piece to nibble at their leisure.

And so life went on at Nooitgedacht most contentedly, all with plenty to do every day, the children giving their parents great pleasure and interest and growing well, and good companions to each other.

CHAPTER 7

JOY AND SORROW MINGLES

At this time Mary was expecting her fourth child, and great was the anticipation of what sex the baby would be. Mary and William entertaining a secret desire that the child would be another boy! They thought that if “Sonny” were to have a brother they would grow up to be such pals, and looking ahead, that together they would be able to relieve William in his old age on the farm.

On October 30th 1873, the family was increased by another son, and Mary and William felt that indeed their cup of joy was filled to overflowing with the gift of this child. Augusta, Sarah and Sonny boy were in high spirits at having a little brother.

Mary indeed had her hands full now, but she was one of those mothers who never spared herself, or thought anything was too much trouble to do for those she loved. The baby thrived for a few weeks, when suddenly he developed diphtheria, a disease which was very prevalent and virulent at the time. Doctors were not easily obtainable, and William and Mary had become accustomed to relying on home remedies. The disease worsened, and the child became very ill. The young life given to them for so short a while passed away on the 10th December 1873. He was unbaptized at the time which was a very real grief to his parents. The little boy Herbert William also contracted diphtheria and was seriously ill from the start with not much hope of recovery, and within the same week the family were bereaved of this child as well.

One can fully realise the grief this double bereavement was to those poor parents and the little girls. Their happiness and hopes shattered within a week.

With Christian faith they bore their sorrow bravely carrying on with the daily tasks and being comforted by the kindness of their own particular family, and numerous friends. Augusta and Sarah helped to brighten the days.

Jeremiah Jennings, William’s eldest brother had married Elizabeth Ann Vice of Molteno on the 31st January 1872. The marriage took place at Stormburg, Cape Colony. John Jennings (the third son of the family) was married to Emma Hinds originally of Potchefstroom, Transvaal.

These two brothers, Jeremiah and John Jennings worked as partners at the alluvial gold diggings at Blaauwbank trying their luck at the project. Living conditions were cramped at the Blaauwbank home, so William suggested to his aged parents that they would be welcome to live at Nooitgedacht. To this James and Sarah readily agreed.

Their large family of sons and daughters were all married at this stage, with the exception of the two younger daughters, Alice and Ada.

There was a small cabinlike house tucked away amongst trees on an incline of a “Koppie” on the eastern side of Nooitgedacht, being a mile or more distant from William and Mary’s residence. Here, James and Sarah Jennings together with the

two girls Alice and Ada arrived, to once again settle. It was a humble home affording little comfort, but very soon a homely atmosphere prevailed, and James once remarked that the years spent at Nooitgedacht, near the huge indigenous fig tree, were some of the happiest of his lifetime. There was a orchard with a varied selection of fruits near at hand for their convenience. James had his own stock and horses of which they were so fond. In this way he enjoyed independency. James, being a good horseman, often found opportunity to have a canter on one of his favourites, and at the same time attend to various light duties on the farm. William and Mary were within walking distance.

He was a great reader, and studied astronomy, in which he found much pleasure. Whenever reading matter could be obtained he tried to acquire it, and often attended sales for that purpose. James thought fondly of his hunting expeditions with his sons up in the wild of Central Africa, and delighted in relating their adventures with a twinkle in his eye and much humour describing the lucky escapes they had.

He was not a big man, and slightly built, with fine character and sense of humour that was to be admired. His wife Sarah, very kindly, but with a rather blunt way of expressing herself. To her a "spade was a spade" as the saying goes and needed no decorations. She had a strong face, and was rather on the stout side and not very tall, a most homely woman in stature and manner.

To her own daughters, and many friends to whom she acted as "midwife" at their confinements, she gave them every attention while in labour, but assured them "that they would be worse before they were better". Having had so large a family herself she certainly spoke from experience. James and Sarah were most united and happy in their marriage, and an example to many of their associates.

CHAPTER 8

A TREK TO THE BUSHVELD

William had property in the Bushveld and during the Winter months he favoured the idea that his cattle would benefit from the change of climate and grazing.

Preparations had to be made for the long trek. Suitable herd boys who had experience with livestock were engaged to take the responsibility of driving the cattle, and to see that they had good grazing and drinking water when they called a halt, or slept overnight en route for their destination.

A wagon had to accompany the trek loaded with provisions sufficient for camping out for a lengthy period. William looked forward with a keen hunter's eagerness to some game shooting as there are plenty of various buck to choose from on his Bushveld farm.

Mary, with the children Augusta and Sarah planned to go with, as it would be an enjoyable holiday for them as well. So there was great excitement in anticipation of the day of departure. For Mary it meant lots of hard work as her responsibility was their larder, and all necessities for camp life. Rusks were baked in large quantities, and various other foodstuffs provided that they would keep fresh for a certain time on the conditions.

At last all was in readiness and the day arrived for their departure. Instructions for the farm work was given to the various trusted servants to be carried out during the family's absence.

The weather was ideal, and there was great activity and commotion at the cattle kraals, but eventually they were on the way amidst much shouting from the servants.

William and the two girls Augusta and Sarah, chose to leave the farm on horseback. The journey was monotonous, but they arrived safely with the cattle and William chose a suitable spot under some beautiful large shady trees, deciding that it was an ideal camping site, the river not far off flowed through the farm convenient for their necessary water supplies. So with excitement and energy they all set about with various duties. William, with the help of the native boys, pitching the tents, which were to act as their living room and bedrooms.

Mary hastily prepared their next meal, with little Augusta and Sarah offering help, and darting about, ever observant to any exquisite birds they saw twittering in the trees, who maybe resented the intrusion to their wild life by human beings. After this, and having partaken of slight refreshment William saddled his horse and rode off eagerly to see the familiar haunts in the vicinity. In a short while he spotted a duiker, and could not resist having a shot at the buck which dropped instantly. He dismounted and lifted his "bag for the pot" slinging it across the front of the saddle. William, pleased with his luck, returned to the camp well satisfied with his first hunt. The natives lost no time in skinning the animal. Later, it could be seen hanging on a nearby branch of a tree ready for the following day's midday meal of venison.

When, after a few days, they had settled to routine, William instructed the natives who were not required as herdboys for the cattle, to set forth into the dense bush with choppers and saws to select suitable timber for various purposes, especially for the making of wagon brake blocks, and for a good supply of wood for the yokes and skuys which were used for inspanning the oxen.

When sufficient wood had been collected for requirements these native servants spent the following days moulding the wood to desired shapes. Some of the workmen had been familiar with this type of crude wood work for years and produced some very good handiwork.

It was also a suitable time to have a supply of riems and strops made from the hides of cattle and large buck which had been previously collected by William for the purpose and brought along with the trek from Nooitgedacht. These hides had first to be soaked in water for at least a week before the hair could be removed. Then the next procedure was to cut the hides into circular lengths for breying. A large stone was selected and a bowshaped piece of substantial wood was tied onto it.

The lengths of hide were thrown across a thick bough of a large tree and brought down to form one continual length of riem, obtained by knotting together. This was then attached to the bow of wood on the stone at a suitable height convenient for the process of breying.

The native boy then chose a long substantial stick and the work would commence by him inserting the stick into the bow of wood and walking round and round twisting the riems, then slowly releasing them, and continuing the action until they became soft and dry. Lard in preference to other fat was rubbed on at intervals to keep the riems pliable.

Mary had to consider the problem of baking bread out of doors, she had the necessary "sour dough" saved from her last baking for rising purposes, but an oven had to be made.

She and the little girls, Augusta and Sarah (Tiny), had found a high bank at the nearby river which they decided was suitable for the purpose. So William offered to shovel out a deep hole in the bank, as he was familiar with these crude ovens, when used camping. After he had done this he produced a piece of sheet iron for a door. All was then in readiness and a log fire was made inside the hole. When sufficiently heated, the coals were scraped out, and Mary quickly popped her breadpans in with the well kneaded and beautifully risen dough in them, hoping all would be well. The result after the baking was pleasing and fresh bread was enjoyed by the family again.

William so accustomed to the wilds, was a lover of nature, and delighted in watching the habits of game which were found grazing in groups wherever he chose to ride on horseback. He at times took the opportunity of shooting one or more of them for the curing of biltong. The animal was skinned and the venison cut in strips seasoned and salted according to taste, then dried at the camp on wires stretched from the branches of trees being conveniently spaced.

After a prolonged holiday, the family returned once again by oxwagon to Nooitgedacht refreshed and happy. The girls with rosy cheeks and looking the

picture of good health. It was a pretty sight seeing the cattle return home with so many young calves.

CHAPTER 9

A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS

On the 9th of December 1875, on the anniversary of Mary Jennings' own birthday, the fifth child of their marriage was born. A fair little girl with lovely blue eyes, both William and Mary felt that by having this baby their sadness of the loss of their two boys may be softened.

They at once decided to name her Edith Mary Louisa, and before long the family were calling her Edie. Augusta and Sarah could not do enough for their baby sister and loved her dearly.

Life went on happily, but two years afterwards the illness diphtheria, so dreaded, once more made its appearance and claimed the life of the child Edie on the 12th January 1877. William and Mary had done their utmost in nursing her night and day, but to no avail.

Edith proved to be the last of William and Mary's family. She was buried as the others were, in the cemetery near the homestead at Nooitgedacht.

Mary, although saddened by this severe loss, bravely carried out her duties without sparing herself. She was passionately fond of flowers, and always managed to have a few potplants, and a garden to care for, and encouraged the children to help her in various ways in the garden.

As Augusta and Sarah grew older, the problem of their education became uppermost in the thoughts of William and Mary, as they were ambitious for their daughters, wishing them to have what they themselves had not had the opportunity of enjoying. This desire was made known to the Rev. Richardson, the Anglican clergyman of Rustenburg, with whom they were well acquainted. He kindly promised to bear this in mind, saying that if he heard of a suitable governess to teach the girls he would lose no time in letting them know of it. So William and Mary secretly hoped it would not be long before their hopes in this respect might be realised.

A Mrs. Heckford had arrived in Rustenburg and was staying with a kindly family there. She had come to this country with a party from England who had come to Africa with the intention of learning to "farm and to learn the Afrikaans language". She had not been here long before she realised that things were not as anticipated, and that the sooner she could make other arrangements for herself, the better.

Mrs. Heckford decided to seek employment as a Governess, and got in touch with the Rev. Richardson intimating her wishes to him. The Rev. Richardson promptly told her of the Jennings family at Nooitgedacht and their wish of having a governess for Augusta and Sarah and said he would let them know that she would be agreeable to take the post without delay.

Some time elapsed, as means of communication were slow, but at hearing from the Rev. Richardson, William and Mary were delighted at the proposition. They decided that without delay or interview with Mrs. Heckford that William would fetch her from Rustenburg.

The journey was made by Cape cart, William using his two favourite horses, Sam and Dick, and accompanied by a young native piccanin. William met Mrs. Heckford, and all was arranged, so after spending the night at Rustenburg, and enjoying an early breakfast Mrs. Heckford was ready with her little dog Gip, as companion, to start a new life on a farm. She found William Jennings in readiness with her luggage well packed in the Cape cart, so with a cheery "all aboard" from William they set off on a drive along rough country roads with pretty scenery all the way.

Mary with Augusta and Sarah welcomed them on arrival at Nooitgedacht and Mrs. Heckford soon made friends with the family, and felt at home. It was a weekend, so school would commence on the Monday, the date being the 16th February 1879.

CHAPTER 10**SCHOOL LIFE COMMENCES**

As I have already mentioned, William's parents James and Sarah Jennings with their two daughters Alice and Ada, were also living on the farm Nooitgedacht. So it was agreed that Mrs. Heckford would teach these girls as well. School life started in earnest and it was not easy for Mrs. Heckford as the girls were different ages and had only had instruction from their parents, but they were eager to learn, and willingly adjusted themselves, and soon understood the routine expected of them each day. There were pianos at both homes, and William and Mary had a harmonium as well.

Mrs. Heckford was required to teach her pupils music, and it must have given her great satisfaction to find they were that way inclined. I think music was an inherited talent, as so many of the Jennings family were gifted, being able to play the piano well, and also being able to sing naturally. In this way they were most entertaining on company when occasions offered.

Mrs. Heckford was a talented artist and encouraged the girls Augusta, Sarah, Alice and Ada in this direction. She soon noticed that Ada and Augusta particularly, showed great interest, and it gave her pleasure to see their progress. Later these two girls persevered, always keen to do better, and were rewarded by their achievements in sketching and painting. Augusta showed an inclination of sketching wild veldt flowers at an early age, and she became an artist of high standard in this respect.

Sarah much preferred the outdoor life to the monotony of the schoolroom. There was so much she wanted to do outside, there were the cattle she loved to watch being milked, and the dogs who were waiting patiently for a romp. There were often tears about lessons, but Mrs. Heckford understood, and had a special liking for this little girl, who she thought of as her "pet".

Alice was the eldest of the scholars, and was found to be reliable and conscientious. Often Mrs. Heckford left her in charge of the schoolroom knowing that Alice would not fail her responsibility entrusted to her.

Mrs. Heckford was amazed to learn of the various household duties Alice did before starting off, accompanied by young Ada, on their walk, or horseback ride every morning to school, a distance of about one mile. A familiar sight in the schoolroom was that of the little dog "Gip" cuddled up snugly, fast asleep on Mrs. Heckford's lap. The tea break at 11am was a time they all looked forward to. Mary generally had a surprise for them, with either hot scones straight from the oven, deliciously buttered, or jam tartlets, small and of the turn-over type. Healthy appetites would make short work of what she so willingly and generously provided. In this way Governess and pupils carried on each day, and Mrs. Heckford felt that her labours of teaching were not in vain. To her life was very different to what she had been accustomed to in England, often the monotony found trying I fear, but William and Mary Jennings were kind friends to her, and she was treated with respect and every consideration by the whole family at Nooitgedacht.



1. *Cassia* 2. *Protea* 3. *Datura Stramonium*.



1. *Buphane* 2. *Hibiscus*.

*From the collection of Water Colour Handpaintings.
By Clifford Augusta Jennings. 1886 – 1894.*

CHAPTER 11

RELIGIOUS SERVICES ARRANGED

Distances were great but the Rev. Richardson used to ride on horseback from Rustenburg to Nooitgedacht. He was always welcome and generally stayed overnight or longer as he wished. Being notified of his visit previously, William and Mary would get in touch with their family at Blaauwbank, Hekpoort and Witfontein, the latter being where the Hartleys lived (Sarah Jennings, William's sister, having married Fred Hartley).

Services were held in the large Drawingroom at Nooitgedacht and there was as a rule a good attendance of relatives and friends. Usually Mrs. Heckford was asked to play the Hymns. On account of her lameness she preferred to use the piano, as she found the harmonium rather strenuous on account of this disability.

Mrs. Heckford had not been at Nooitgedacht very long before the natives referred to her as "Makolekolle" A Susoto name, which I understand has the meaning of "Walking with a limp".

Bishop Bousfield, the Bishop of Pretoria, also used to travel up the valley from there on horseback, a distance of over 50 miles to visit the family at Nooitgedacht. After an overnight rest William Jennings would accompany him to visit other resident Anglicans in the nearby vicinity either on horseback or in a Cape cart. A Church Service would follow on the Sunday. After which the Bishop returned to Pretoria.

An amusing incident happened during one of these visits of the Bishop to Nooitgedacht. Augusta Jennings had a pet rockrabbit, known to the family as Dassie, who was greatly privileged in the home, and delighted in various pranks to the dismay of his mistress. On the Bishop retiring to his bedroom one evening, he found that Dassie had taken possession, and was comfortably curled up in his bed. So Augusta was called to take the culprit away, much to Dassie's indignation.

Bishop Bousfield arranged a Confirmation Service to be held at Nooitgedacht home during May 1879. This was the first Confirmation of the Parish. The candidates were James and Sarah Jennings, parents of William, with their daughters Alice and Ada, also Augusta their granddaughter, (the last mentioned later became my mother).

I have amongst my cherished possessions Augusta's Confirmation Card signed by the Bishop. It is unlike the very plain ones of today, in contrast there is much colour, and it is attractively decorated. There is a "daily prayer" printed on the front and "The Creed" on the back of the card.

The prayer is the one used at the Anglican Confirmation Service when the Bishop lays his hands upon the head of his candidates and blesses them. It was always my mother's "special prayer" which she passed on to her only granddaughter Joyce Mary Sanders, who in turn always remembered the words and found comfort in them.

It was not until the year 1884 that the Anglican community of the district felt it was possible to build a church at Thorndale, midway between Nooitgedacht and Magaliesburg and not far from Hekpoort. It was known as "St. Thomas" and Bishop Bousfield came from Pretoria and consecrated it during the year 1885. There was

great rejoicing to have a church at last. My mother Augusta Jennings, as a young girl, was organist in this church for a great many years, retiring from this duty to her church during June 1894. The congregation of "St. Thomas" presented her with a suitable inscribed gift in recognition of her services. This I have as a memento of those "gonebye days".



CLIFFORD AUGUSTA JENNINGS
at the age of 17 years

CHAPTER 12

IN THE DAYS OF YORE

The old native Chief Mosilikatz was well known to the Jennings family, as they were allowed to hunt in his part of the country, and often there was an exchange of goods and gifts between them. On one occasion, soon after the Chief's death, James Jennings, together with his hunting sons were passing along the territory, and were encountered by Mangwan, son of Mosilikatz. He had fallen desperately in love with one of his father's young wives, who had happened to be an especial favourite.

This courtship was not allowed by native law, and he would have been faced with death had it been found out. So in consequence he was in a great dilemma. The young lovers implored protection, having fled together from their kraal overnight. On hearing their plight, James Jennings consented with great amusement, to enter into the conspiracy, and said he would allow them to travel with the wagons well hidden, and they could make a home on his farm on arrival at Blaauwbank in the Transvaal.

Do all went well, and Mangwan with his wife lived happily together later producing a fine son, who they named Magalies. Mangwan, thinking himself far superior, never seemed to mix with the ordinary natives on the farm, and always conversed in the Zulu language. He also considered he was above exerting himself by doing actual manual labour, although this might be expected of him. He had not forgotten his heritage, and maintained a certain regal appearance throughout his lifetime. Always respectful, and civil in his behaviour, and with a secret lasting gratitude to the Jennings family for having befriended him and his wife, throughout the years of their self-imposed exile from his territory. Later they moved to Nooitgedacht, and William Jennings allowed him to build his kraal on a koppie near his old Master's small home on the portion of the farm later known to the family as the Fountains. A large syringe tree marked the site. There are still evidence of the foundation stones to mark the spot where the Mangwan family had lived for many years. There are many amusing stories I have heard of Mrs. Mangwan when visiting the family at times.

Nooitgedacht must have been teeming with game during the long years previous to William's purchase of the farm. There are many places in this area named after different species of game which seem to prove this: Olifants Hoek, Olifants Nek and Olifants Dam are not far from Nooitgedacht. This seems proof enough that elephant were roaming the countryside here. The dam mentioned commands a lovely view from the road and now is a popular pleasure resort.

The Hartebeespoort Dam on the Crocodile river is too well known to need description. It is situated about 25 miles from Nooitgedacht and provides a livelihood for many farmers in the Brits irrigation area, receiving water from canals.

"Hartbeeshoek" where the famous Satellite Tracking Station now stands, the staff of which are doing valuable research work and known throughout the world, is 15 miles distant.

Hartebeesfontein adjoins Hekpoort with a farming community.

Buffelshoek is about eight miles from Nooitgedacht, and Buffelspoort on the north side across the Magaliesburg Mountain from the farm is now a very modern and attractive tourist and holiday resort.

Quaggasfontein is a farm near Magaliesburg and near Tarlton Station is a farm named Elandsvlei. These two farms were both occupied by the Sanders family, the former being the old home of William Smith and Elsie Maria Sanders who were my husband's grandparents.

At present ribbuck, duiker, steenbuck, leopard and hyena are still to be found on Nooitgedacht.

During the year of 1953, a geologist, Mr. L.W. Blom discovered prehistoric rock engravings on Nooitgedacht, on the part known as Masokwane. Examined by Prof. Battiss, his opinion was that the engravings discovered are probably 5,000 years of age.

The engravings are very good specimens showing a variety of animals, the ones found so far are of elephant, rhino, sable antelope, eland, zebra and wild pig. Prof. Battiss the well known artist said on examining the engravings that there was a variation in artist styles. Those found at Nooitgedacht were executed in finer detail than some which had been discovered at Hekpoort which is a distance of about four miles from this farm.

One stone found at Nooitgedacht has a splendid engraving of a zebra. This specimen was displayed at an Art Exhibition held in Pretoria some years ago. Prof. Battiss wished it to be exhibited. Two of the engravings are now to be seen built into the mantelpiece of a modern home here. Our eldest son Erroll, chose them from some which were only about a mile away from their residence at Masokwani. The site of this particular homestead also has an historic background. It is here that the Boer forces, during the Anglo Boer War of 1900, mounted their guns and operated them when directing an attack on Hekpoort. To them it was known as Kannon Kop. There was also a native kraal on this particular spot. Indications of the stone walls are still visible.

CHAPTER 13

MRS. HECKFORD'S ACTIVITIES ON THE FARM NOOITGEDACHT

Mrs. Heckford had learned to understand the Afrikaans language during the time she spent as Governess to the four Jennings girls. Her adventurous spirit was never suppressed, and she formed the idea that she would like to purchase a farm and made enquiries accordingly. William Jennings, on hearing of her desire and I think more out of feeling of protection to her being a woman, offered to sell her a part of Nooitgedacht as a trial to fulfil her wish. This offer she gladly accepted.

To the family of Jennings it all seemed a big undertaking for her to consider, but she was unafraid to make the venture and arrangements were settled accordingly i.e. :- "That Mrs. Heckford would not pay the purchase money for some months, and would be at liberty to change her mind if she chose before the date of settlement was due".

The property was the eastern part of the farm Nooitgedacht. I am not sure of the extent, but it was known as Groenfontein. It was where James and Sarah Jennings Senior were living in a small cottage with Alice and Ada their young daughters when they came to live at Nooitgedacht from Blaauwbank at William and Mary's kind suggestion. The family had lived here for some years, but when Mrs. Heckford decided to give up her post as Governess and was taking over that particular portion of the farm it had already been decided that James and Sarah Jennings with their family would be leaving Nooitgedacht and their intention was to live at Pretoria.

Emma, one of their daughters was married to Alginy Scrooby and was living there. She had fortunately secured a small house suitable for her parents and sisters, and was delighted to think they would be near her.

It had not been easy for James to make the decision to move from Nooitgedacht. He had become so attached to their surroundings, and was such a lover of nature and the wilds. His health was causing anxiety, he had suffered from a chronic bronchial condition for many years, most like due to the exposure during his earlier outdoor life when on hunting expeditions in Central Africa. It was decided that by living as Pretoria he would be more easily be able to have medical advice and treatment, and that it would be more comfortable in every respect for himself and Sarah in their declining years to live in a town.

It was with sad hearts that the Jennings family (Senior) trekked away by oxwagon, Ada's thoughts were for her pet cats and their welfare. She had entrusted one to Mrs. Heckford's care. William, Mary, Augusta and young Sarah stood by wishing their dear ones a safe journey and the best of luck, promising them that it would not be long before they would visit them in their new home.

Mrs. Heckford after their departure arranged to move into the small cottage which was on the property she now considered her own, and she planned to build a new home some distance from where she would be living.

A young lad by the name of Jimmy who Mrs. Heckford had known before leaving England, and who was one of the party she had come with to South Africa, had consented to come to Nooitgedacht to be a help to her in carrying out her plans to building a homestead, and learning to farm.

The house was so designed that her horse stable adjoined her bedroom! The door was to be a half door, which would enable her to have a peep at her pet horse, Eclipse, whenever she desired. This animal she had bought soon after her arrival at Nooitgedacht, and he afforded her much pleasure in many happy rides all over the country side. The grooming of Eclipse she would not entrust to a servant, and every day she attended to this herself, also arranging his bedding in the stable, and feeding. This must have all been strenuous for her. Naturally the horse responded to the affection and especial attention shown him, and although he had been known to have bad habits, he never attempted to display them with Mrs. Heckford.

Being a cripple, Mrs. Heckford's side saddle had been specially made for her comfort. The crutches differently placed to an ordinary side saddle.

Horses spent a lot of time in their stables as horse-sickness was very prevalent. As a safeguard they were not allowed to graze on the veld until the dew on the grass had dried off.

Eventually workmen were employed and the making of bricks for the home began. It all entailed a lot of Mrs. Heckford's personal supervision and there were many handicaps and disappointments. With grim determination against so many odds, she persevered day by day. Workmen came and left again and others replaced them. It was not until November 1880 that her home was complete and she was able to move into it. Great was Mrs. Heckford's satisfaction and excitement prevailed. William and Mary Jennings with Augusta and Sarah rejoiced with her. Dr. Heckford's photograph was the first to be hung up in the diningroom.

Mrs. Heckford enjoyed the feeling of independence for a while, and having a home of her very own again. She had her horse Eclipse to whom she devoted much time. Riding seemed to be her only means of getting about except by oxwagon, which she never enjoyed.

The workmen together with her native boys were busily engaged with the making of a dam which was situated some distance below the homestead. After a while the enterprise lost its novelty, and became rather a burden of expense with little reward. Mrs. Heckford seriously thought that after all, it would not be profitable to carry on with her farming. With such an active brain she was already anxious to further yet another scheme she entertained.

This was of trading by oxwagon which she intended to accompany on horseback throughout the Bushveld and Transvaal to provide the isolated farmers with goods in exchange for their products, or for cash as would be preferred.

At this time the family of Jennings had decided to visit Mary's sisters who were living at Molteno, Cape Colony. So they left for their holiday by oxwagon once again, to travel the roads they were familiar with, but had not seen since the journey to the Transvaal after William and Mary's marriage early during the year 1866.

They were eagerly looking forward to seeing their relatives after so many long years, and renewing old friendships of their youth. To the girls Augusta and Sarah, it would be a new experience, and the thought of their holiday thrilled them with excitement.

It was lonely for Mrs. Heckford at her Groenfontein of Nooitgedacht, without any of the family at home, she missed Mary particularly as she was a good friend to her at all times. Mrs. Heckford was an intellectual woman and also a very good artist, so she made good use of her talents. Organising each day's work, with household duties kept her very busy but there was little time for pleasure or rest. She decided that when William Jennings returned to Nooitgedacht she would tell him of her "Scheme" and that she did not wish to purchase the portion of the farm as proposed previously.



Mrs. Sarah Heckford, governess to Alice, Ada, Augusta and Sarah Jennings at "Nooitgedacht", in the year 1879.

CHAPTER 14

PREPARATION FOR A TREK TO THE BUSHVELD

It took Mrs. Heckford some time to organise before starting on the trek to the Bushveld. Spans of oxen and wagons had to be purchased. She used to ride to Pretoria on horseback staying overnight at Skeerpoort with friends or relatives of the Jennings family.

They all admired Mrs. Heckford's pluck and were ever ready to welcome and accommodate her, and help her in any way they could.

She had also to engage reliable natives for drivers and voorlopers for the transport venture, and made enquiries in this connection en route. At last, all was ready, and Mrs. Heckford started off on her travels mounted on her favourite Eclipse, in company with the oxwagon which was transporting her goods for exchange of agricultural produce, or for cash, whichever method was favourable to herself and the parties. Her feelings, when leaving Nooitgedacht were mixed, that of excitement to think her project was on the way, and others of having to face the unknown hardships of camp life without any companionship except that of her horse, and a future all unknown. The responsibility of having to control the servants, and care for the oxen on trek.

First, she had to reach Pretoria, and load the wagons with suitable goods for bartering, and which she might think the backveld community would need. At last all was in readiness and she started the wagons off directing her drivers on to the "Great North Road" as it is today known, and later on followed at her leisure to catch up the trek, and choose the first outspan which had to be near water and grazing for the oxen.

She travelled along enjoying the freedom and novelty of it all. At times she called at farms and the owners were most hospitable and invited her to their homes to share a cup of coffee and boerbeskuit or rusks as we know them now, and also to offer her advice as to where they thought trade would be favourable. They were amazed to think Mrs. Heckford was on her own unaided by any white person, and probably thought it was most unwise of a mere woman.

After the rains came and made travelling most difficult, and the wagons would become stuck in the mud of drifts and rivers, and camping would be most unpleasant with everything saturated with water. Fortunately she had provided reliable tarpaulins or (bucksails more commonly spoken of here) to keep all the goods and her bedding and clothing dry.

Her first thought when calling a halt and outspan was Eclipse's comfort, without fail he would be groomed only by herself and blanketed for warmth for the night in the veld.

It was impossible to have provided a variety of food for meals which she had to provide herself, but whatever was available she enjoyed as the out of door life created a healthy appetite, and she enjoyed the responsibility and novelty of it. In this way they journeyed on, often bartering goods for wheat and mealies. Mrs. Heckford obtained fresh eggs from the farmers' wives in exchange for articles of

clothing, and often pretty things the young girls of the family fancied. A colourful necklace of beads might be fancied and a bargain clinched to satisfy a youthful desire.

It often meant night travelling to push onto a suitable outspan site, with convenient water, and this was most pleasant especially on moonlight evenings. Mrs. Heckford often had the experience when riding along to come upon herds of wild buck grazing near the roads, then when the wagons came rumbling along and the drivers spotted them and clapped their long whips the animals would scamper away in alarm to safety.

Mrs. Heckford travelled far up into the regions of the Northern Transvaal, noting the altered scenery and dense growth of bush and beautiful trees the further she travelled. She was intrigued with the country, it seemed to hold a fascination for her and she made her way as far up as the roads would allow, at times following the wood cutters on horseback to obtain information from them of where she was likely to do good trading.

It so happened that in later years about 1893 – 1894 onwards for a considerable time, she lived and carried out farming operations on a farm purchased in the area where Majajie known as the Rain Queen lived. She farmed together with a relative, and during this time she was in the midst of the Magoeba War, and experienced some frightening times, but was never molested.

CHAPTER 15

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Augusta and Sarah Jennings were without a governess again. After some time a Miss Clarke, an English woman filled the post. She had only been in the country a short while, an excellent teacher, but unable to adapt herself to the life on a farm, so different to what she had been accustomed to. A favourite expression of hers was "In England we live indoors and here you live out of doors". The vegetable pumpkin used by the family she said was only used as cowfeed in England. Poor Mary, found it difficult to prepare and serve meals to her liking, it was not easy to add variety to the everyday menus and make them attractive, as commodities were scarce, although there were always fresh vegetables and plenty of milk, fresh butter and eggs. Indeed a most wholesome fare.

The girls progressed well with their studies, Mrs. Heckford had given them an excellent start, and they were eager to further their education. Unfortunately after some months at Nooitgedacht Miss Clarke made the decision to return to England and when she left, their actual schooling terminated, and Augusta and Sarah had to rely on their own ability to further their education in the best way they could.

Miss Clarke was entrusted with some money to buy Augusta and Sarah gifts from England which William and Mary wished to give their daughters. Her choice for them was a silver serviette ring for each, prettily and differently designed with their own initials engraved on them. These have been in continual use in the family ever since. Both mementos of my mother's and Aunt Sarah's girlhood.

William Jennings had quite a few ostriches and it was quite usual to see them walking about in the veld quite near the homestead, some had become very tame. One of William's nephews, a young Hartley, who visited, delighted in teasing the birds, and then there would be a frantic race for safety with one of the cock birds in full pursuit of him, endeavouring to overtake him. Often, if not quick enough in his escape a nasty kick from the ostrich was the result.

Augusta loved pets and had tamed a young springbuck and other different creatures of the veld, these had to be fed and cared for each day. Generally these pets came to some untimely end and Augusta would weep with grief about them, but soon would adopt another to lavish her affections on.

The unrest and warclouds of 1881 came to disturb the peaceful life at Nooitgedacht. It was eventually decided that for safety the Jennings family would move from the farm to Pretoria for protection until things had settled. So arrangements were made by William and Mary Jennings with saddened hearts for their departure, and their trustworthy servants were instructed to do their best with regard to caring for the stock and crops on the lands, and to carry on Holding the Fort, as the saying goes, without Master or Mistress.

The family left Nooitgedacht with many misgivings, and knowing that the camplife in Pretoria would be monotonous and uncomfortable. All they had worked for was on the farm. William had build up a splendid herd of cattle and a flock of sheep, and the horses were valuable and dearly loved by the family. All the English South Africans were faced with the same decision to make.

I shall not dwell on the long months that followed except to say “they were the most difficult”. Only the children thought being confined in the Bungalows in Pretoria was fun, as so many of them were together and they had much interest in surroundings.

William did his “bit” and Mary bravely cared for Augusta and Sarah. When everything had quietened down and was over and the “Retrocession of the Transvaal” was published in General Orders, the family returned back to find their farm Nooitgedacht practically ruined. All that they had left behind was gone, and the farm seemed a scene of utter desolation.

Together William and Mary had to start all over again, with very little except their pluck and determination to help them along. They were accustomed to hard work, and faced their adversities to the best of their ability, helped and strengthened by the love and true comradeship for each other. The “Retrocession” had left its mark on William Jennings who was bitterly disappointed. The strain began to affect his health generally.

Travelling by Cape Cart on one of the long journeys he had undertaken, the sun proved to be too severe for him and on reaching home he became seriously ill with brain fever. He seemed to realise that the end was not far off, and told Mary that he had provided for her and the two girls as he thought best. On the 12th March, 1882, Mary was widowed, and Augusta and Sarah had lost a much loved Father. He had such a jolly nature, always ready for a game with his young daughters. He was delighted when they accompanied him on horseback rides and loved to tease them.

To Mary the light of her life was extinguished, but realising that her feelings had to be set aside for the sake of Augusta and Sarah, she made a pledge that she would not fail in her responsibility to them.

She never spared herself, and although faced with great difficulties, she carried on farming Nooitgedacht and won through for their benefit.

CHAPTER 16

THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED

Fortunately for Mary Jennings the servants on the farm Nooitgedacht were perfectly agreeable to carry on with their work under her supervision. Two trustworthy natives, Saul and Simon, who had been William's transport wagon drivers undertook a lot of the responsibility willingly.

The stock were cared for, and the agricultural work was done as usual. Wheat, mealies and forage were grown on the lands, the crops being irrigated from the dam which collected its water from the mountain stream. This dam William had made himself. William's brothers who lived at Hekpoort and Blaauwbank kindly advised Mary if problems arose, and John Jennings undertook to attend to all business matters for her.

In this way Mary, with her two daughters, Augusta aged 13 years, and Sarah aged 11 years lived on at Nooitgedacht appreciating their home. Sarah had inherited her father's sense of humour and was brimful with energy. She enjoyed being out of doors and was particularly fond of cattle, being observant she was able to notice if there was anything amiss with the herd while she visited the kraals each day and could report to Mary, which was helpful.

Both girls were attractive in their own particular way, although very unlike in looks and nature they were very good companions.

With their Father's death they had resolved to do their best and tried to take over some of the duties daily which they were capable of doing. Augusta being musically inclined always found time to spend at the piano practising, her Father had given her the instrument before his death. She also found great pleasure in collecting wild flowers of the veld, and was ambitious to sketch and paint them. At this early age she showed great talent in this direction.

Often their young cousins would arrive at the farm from Hekpoort and Blaauwbank, either on horseback or by horse drawn carts, and would remain with the family for a weekend. The house would ring with merriment and music during their visit. Mary would spend her time preparing good things to eat to satisfy those youthful hungry appetites.

After some time had elapsed, Mary, on advice from her relatives, decided to take a holiday with the two girls to visit relatives living at Molteno, Cape Colony, so preparations were made accordingly. William's brother George and his wife had offered to stay at Nooitgedacht and take charge during their absence from the farm.

So the family were away for a few months and returned refreshed, after a delightful holiday. Sarah married George William Hinds on the 30th August 1887. The ceremony was solemnised at St. Thomas's Church, Thorndale. Sarah made a pretty bride, just 18 years of age! George's parents lived at Potchefstroom, and were friends of the Jennings'. Many years earlier Alice Jennings (Sarah's aunt) and school companion had married the eldest brother Thomas Charles Hinds. After the marriage George and Sarah Hinds settled at Nooitgedacht with Mary and Augusta Jennings, and George took over the farming and it was good for them to feel there

was a man who would shoulder the work and responsibility once again and relieve Mary of much anxiety.

William Jennings Hinds, the eldest child of this marriage, was born on 10th June, 1888. The family rejoiced, and to Mary his Grandmother, it almost seemed as if her own little William (Sonny) had been given back to them. The baby boy resembled him so much, and she lavished her love and affection on this child. Four years later on Will's birthday a pretty little sister arrived, and George and Sarah named her Gladys. Both these children in later years had the privilege of also being taught by Mrs. Heckford for a short while, when, after returning from England, she stayed with the family at Nooitgedacht once again, after a considerable time had elapsed. She was pleased to renew her friendship with the family, and learned to know George Hinds and the two young children. This was during the years 1899 – 1900.

Clifford Augusta Jennings' marriage to Harry Clement Hinds took place on the 1st May 1895 also at St. Thomas Church, Thorndale where Augusta had been the organist for many years. Augusta was 28 years of age at the time, a very lovely girl. Harry, was George Hinds' younger brother. So the two sisters had married brothers.

The greenery for the church decorations for this marriage was collected at Maloney's Eye, near Magaliesburg.

Harry and Augusta Hinds made their first home at Hekpoort. Mary remained at Nooitgedacht but after her second daughter's marriage she made the decision to forfeit her claim of the farm Nooitgedacht inherited by herself and her daughters Augusta and Sarah, and subsequently had the farm divided by the two daughters.

Harry and Augusta built a home of their own on the portion of Nooitgedacht allotted to Augusta and to distinguish the two farms, theirs was known as The Fountains.

After they were settled in the new home Mary Jennings decided to live with Harry and Augusta permanently.

George and Sarah Hinds' family had increased to three at this stage, as another little daughter had arrived on the 6th August 1896. A lovely child with expressive eyes.

Harry and Augusta Hinds were my parents, the date of my birth being the 26th June, 1898. I was told it was night of great festivity in the town of Rustenburg, as the Masonic Ball was taking place that evening. Many relatives and friends of the family were there having travelled from their country homes by oxwagon and horsecars to be present at the function.

My father's brother, Fred, happened to be there. On hearing of my arrival and witnessing my father's excitement, he exclaimed "and the baby is only a girl"! What made the incident so amusing was that exactly 11 years afterwards on the same date, his wife presented him with a daughter, who proved to be an only child like myself.

I was named Muriel Heckford.



*The piano which was a gift to Augusta Jennings from her Father William Jennings. This instrument travelled by ox-wagon with the family to Pretoria and returned after hostilities to Nooitgedacht.
Muriel Sanders, Augusta's daughter seated at the piano
In 1974.*

CHAPTER 17

THE ANGLO BOER WAR

My parents with me as a young child, and my Grandmother had only been in the new home for six months when the war clouds of 1899 came to alarm their peace and happiness, and they had to consider what was best for all concerned during activities. The two families on Nooitgedacht stayed on the farm as long as they possibly could. The brothers George and Harry Hinds were eventually commandeered. This was distasteful to them having come from British stock.

Later they were allowed to return home with instructions given that they were to attend to the farming operations of Burghers who lived in the surrounding area and were away on active service, giving all assistance from their own farms which they did. These men were kept busy from dawn to dusk carrying out these duties entrusted to them. Later, when news came through that all the English were being taken prisoners and Augusta and Sarah Hinds' uncle had already been captured at Hekpoort, George and Harry Hinds made the decision that they would try and make an escape from Nooitgedacht, to reach the British lines which were camped out about 12 miles from the farm. They left together, and it was arranged they should give a signal of their safety if they got through without mishap.

This being, that a fire would spring up (and be seen by their wives and families) next to a stone wall on a hill which is en route to Magaliesburg. These anxious wives watched for the sign which sure enough appeared eventually telling them that all was well. This wall is still seen from any vantage point on our farm and to me, who heard the story from my parents, it stands out as a memento of this incident and a reminder of their undaunted courage.

Thus they departed, and the womenfolk and their families remained on their farms, bravely conducting to the best of their ability and with the aid of the servants, the farming operations and care of the stock until it became essential for them to leave for Pretoria to seek safety. Augusta and Sarah decided, if any enquiries were made regarding their husbands, they would remain truthful and tell exactly where their husbands were.

My father had a beautiful horse which he thought he might need while in the military service, and my mother watched over and cared for this animal day and night for months. The stable boy would exercise him, and it was arranged that the horse would be safer if his sleeping quarters were changed often. He was sent after dark to my Aunt Sarah's stable periodically. Later my Father was able to send for the horse, as he was entrusted to a cousin's care, and it so happened that was the last they heard of him!

Once, while Harry Hinds, my Father, was on active service, being camped in the nearby vicinity of Nooitgedacht, he had an opportunity of sending some provisions home, and he had engaged two natives to deliver the goods on horseback. These boys galloped up towards the homestead, but on nearing it they were greeted with a shower of bullets from Boer Snipers who were sheltered in the Magaliesburg mountain behind the house. Fortunately, the natives frightened as they were, had not dismounted their horses, and with great presence of mind galloped away again as fast as they could, and managed to get away without being harmed, although

greatly endangered. This scene was witnessed from our verandah by my Grandmother and Mother.

The following day some of the Burghers came to the house as usual to ask for something in the line of groceries they required. My Mother greeted them bravely and unafraid and observed them clicking their guns when she enquired of them "surely it was not any of you who fired at unarmed innocent native horsemen who rode up to this house yesterday, and knowing there were only women and a child here?". Their reply was "No Mrs. Hinds" and looking rather shamefaced.

There were many amusing incidents which happened during hostilities which stand out clearly in my memory as told by our family.

One poor Boer lady was preparing to leave their farm for safer quarters the following morning, and was making some "Vetkoekies" for the journey when the British Tommies stormed into her kitchen and simply devoured all the koekies she had already made!

She fumed, and was indeed in great dilemma, so having a large apron on, she very quickly decided to safeguard her efforts by popping them into her apron front, and holding tight, while she proceeded with making the "Vetkoekies". In this way she was able to provide for their tuckbox without further trouble, and to her own relieved satisfaction.

The story was told of another prank of the British Tommies which must have caused great indignation and some bitter rears. One woman considering there may be an invasion into her home at any time by the Khaki's (as they spoke of the British Tommies) had carefully packed away her "Kerk Klere" in a tin canister for safety and hidden it. To her dismay when the Tommies did arrive it was not long before the canister was discovered, and she saw them arranging themselves in her precious finery.

With little delay one of the men jumped onto his horse after the dressing up, and with a hop of glee galloped away leaving his companions behind, who roared with laughter at the comical spectacle he presented.

My Aunt Sarah Hinds of Nooitgedacht had an experience of the British Tommies' daring and search for excitement. She had just churned a lovely batch of fresh butter early that morning and missed it from her pantry later, so enquired of her servants about the disappearance so suddenly. A native servant boy happened to look out of the window just in time to see a Tommy riding off on horseback with the bucketful of fresh butter, most likely delightedly anticipating a rare treat of bread with plenty of butter to share with his comrades. All this happened in the short while that my Aunt spent talking to one of the Officers, who on hearing of the incident, promptly gave orders that the culprit was to be found and the butter returned immediately to Mrs. Hinds.

The British Tommies were, as the saying goes, here, there and everywhere. They often discovered turkey hens sitting on their eggs at the farmyards visited. Invariably they would take the lot, and one can well imagine their disappointment in finding the eggs were addled in most cases and the desire for boiled turkey eggs not fulfilled.

So these were the happenings on and around Nooitgedacht while Mary Jennings and her two daughters Augusta and Sarah and their families bravely stayed in their homes on the farm and did their best before they finally decided it was unsafe to remain any longer.

Arrangements were made to leave for Pretoria, and they managed to take necessary furniture and other belongings with them, knowing that on their return to Nooitgedacht a scene of desolation and destruction would present itself, and it would mean starting all over again as their parents had done previously after the 1881 War.

My Grandmother expressed the wish that the curtains were to remain hanging otherwise the house would look so bare and desolate. It was with sad hearts and many misgivings that these courageous women left Nooitgedacht for a life in a town so foreign to them.

CHAPTER 18

THE BATTLE OF NOOITGEDACHT

The farm Nooitgedacht from where I am now writing has an historical significance as it was the actual battlefield and scene of the major success to the Boer forces on the 13th December, 1900, during the Anglo Boer War. At that particular time the farm was owned by my Mother, Augusta Hinds, and her sister Sarah Hinds, daughters of William and Mary Jennings from whom they inherited the property.

Nooitgedacht was purchased by my Grandfather, William Jennings, who took over the ownership during the year 1871. Over a century ago! I am pleased to say that the portion which belonged to my Mother still remains in the family.

I have gathered information from various members of our family and other sources throughout my lifetime as we have been so closely associated with events during and after the battle of Nooitgedacht.

During the early part of December 1900, General Clements was stationed with a force of men well over 1,000 in strength at Krugersdorp. They had previously had encounters with the Boer forces in the not too distant outlying areas of the district. General de La Rey with his Commando was camped in the countryside in and around the Hekpoort valley. This was guerrilla warfare, and they were well camouflaged by the indigenous trees and bush in the Hekpoort valley and surrounding hills so familiar to the Commandos. This was an advantage against the British regiments.

An Uncle of mine Thomas Hinds risked his life to warn General Clements of the danger he would encounter with an advance of his troops in this particular direction, as he was aware of the whereabouts of De La Rey's commando at the time. I understand that General Clements fully realised his men were not sufficient in strength, as he knew that General Beyers was approaching from the north, having been camped in the vicinity of Warmbaths for some time and would probably join De La Rey's commando if possible.

General Clements had received orders from head office in Pretoria that he was to proceed with the force from Krugersdorp to the Hekpoort valley and on towards the south of the Magaliesburg mountains. He expected reinforcements would join him from Pretoria, these apparently never arrived.

So General Clement with his men left Krugersdorp during the first week of December, and marched on according to instructions and arrived safely into the Hekpoort valley without encountering any interference from the Boer Commandos. Eventually they proceeded and pitched camp beneath the shadow of the Magaliesburg mountains and more to the western side of the farm Nooitgedacht.

There, General Clements and the regiments under his command, spent some days preparing for whatever was in store for them. Higher up the rugged mountain top and slopes on the side, British posts were picketed. Climbing is difficult, and very steep, with huge boulders of rock jutting out, and this gave wonderful coverage for the men engaged in warfare.

General Beyers had not met the British General Broadwoods' regiment who were supposed to be on the heights and vicinity of the top of the Magaliesburg Mountain from the back of the range. During this time it seems likely that General Beyers got into communication with General De La Rey and their plans were made for attack.

December 12th dawned and there was still no sign of the reinforcements expected by General Clements, and all was apparently quiet.

During the night, General Beyers placed his Burghers in positions he decided upon, and told them an attack was arranged to take place in the early hours of the following morning December 13th, by them on the "Khaki's" as they used to call the British Tommies. In the dim light of early morning the Burghers steadily felt their way towards the British Camp, and completely surprised the regiments under General Clement's command. The first contact came from the west of the farm Nooitgedacht and the first shots were fired intensified by the ringing echo from the mountain in the background. Troops rushed from all quarters, and there was a fierce encounter of fighting. The big British guns were brought into action and made their heavy firing felt and soon the Burghers retired into the nearby bush for shelter much alarmed.

An incident I was told of was of Colonel Legge who was in command of one of the British mounted Brigades. Taking charge he tried to save a picket of men but was shot himself later. There were very few survivors after the severe onslaught to tell what had actually happened but the Boers knew, and lived to tell the tale.

At sunrise the battle was raging. Both the British and Boer forces were feeling the strain at this stage after hours of fierce fighting. General Clements was in full command of the engagement. At last there were signs of retreat by the Burghers as they hurriedly scrambled back to their horses a short distance away. The British returned to camp leaving some Infantry in charge of the big guns on the side of the mountain. The Boers realised their advantage on these men and directed some heavy firing onto them, this giving the desired result. Amongst those who lost their lives were some of General Clements' staff. After this the British retaliated to the best of their ability.

It was thought by the British that the encounters had come from General De La Rey's Commando being unaware that the two General Beyers and De La Rey were working in conjunction with each other. Anyhow, with the renewed attack from the British lines, the tune of events was changed in this skirmish, and the Burghers suffered severely.

Afterwards there was a period of quietness experienced by both the Boer and British columns considering what the next move would be, and with a feeling of expectancy and wondering what the next development would be. Suddenly, the British guns were put to action and aim was directed onto the heights of the Magaliesburg Mountain. It was noticed to be virtually alive with Boers crouching and crawling carefully along the forbidding edge of the jagged rock precipices.

The firing on top of the mountain became incessant and alarming, and General Clements realised that the Northumberlands were in trouble. They heliographed their distress saying they were outnumbered, and needed help urgently. Their request was instantly granted and a reinforcement sent off to their aid. Climbing the steep incline of the mountain was difficult to these men and much time was lost in covering

the distance to the heights. Also, they were practically targets for the Boers above and few escaped death in this gallant attempt to relieve their comrades.

General Beyers with his large force of Burghers were gradually drawing around the Northumberlands and they were faced with certain death, whether they were to be flung from the top over the rocks in front or they were to put up the white flag. They chose the latter. This meant that Clements' force was exceedingly reduced down on the plateau below. Then the Boers from the heights and vantage points fired continuously on the British camped below on Nooitgedacht. The artillery men were put into action and there was a terrific bombardment, but it was clearly a case of being overpowered by General Beyers and General De La Rey's forces being so much stronger in manpower and advantage.

General Clements directing his force below the mountain suffered incessant firing from the heights of the range, and indeed from all quarters, and losses were great.

As I understand it, British gunners were operating from a steep position and had to contend with uninterrupted interferences from the Boers, and men were being killed and wounded leaving very few to carry on their duties. The Officer in charge of this battery used his own initiative and without delay decided to send some of the guns back to safety if possible. So with great haste and deliberation this was done. The remaining gun was reported to be in danger as the Boers were advancing, and was between the nearest British camp. With quick decision those in charge ordered to cease activities, and speedily made a desperate drive in a round about way to get back to camp which was achieved after a very uncomfortable rough journey.

The main British camp at the foot of the mountain was feeling the strain of onslaught, artillery men had guns in full action. A gallant last effort! Orders were given for retreat. Supply wagons were driven off with haste, drivers acting heroically. Some wagons had to be abandoned. The oxen were killed while on trek. One gun was dragged over the veld to safety by manpower.

General Clements with his gallant force of men who were now reduced to half their number, retreated, in the best way they could, making for a hill some miles from the battlefield. It has been known ever since as Yeomanry Hill. From this position orders were given to reopen action and the guns were directed on to the evacuated British camp.

The Boers returned the offensive, but were busily helping themselves to whatever could be made use of in the camp. Gradually activities came to an end.

Later without signs of any more trouble, General Clements marched his men throughout the night, reaching Rietfontein the following morning.

I close this chapter with real regret for all those brave men who fought in both the British and Boer forces and sacrificed their lives here on this farm Nooitgedacht. All splendid men who learned even in Warfare to respect each other. Ever since British and Boer have lived and worked together in many spheres of life being comrades and the best of friends, and I sincerely hope this may continue for all time.

CHAPTER 19

INCIDENTS DURING AND AFTER THE ANGLO BOER WAR

Many relatives of the young soldiers who lost their lives at the Battle of Nooitgedacht got in communication with our family and carried on correspondence in some cases from one generation to another.

Lieutenant Mudge was buried with comrades in a small cemetery on the summit of the Magaliesburg Mountain, and each year regularly until the Great War, when in England everything was disorganised, a spray of heather from the family garden at "Sydney" Plympton would be sent out at Christmas time to be placed on his grave. My Aunt Sarah Hinds undertook to have this done, and after her death the little spray of remembrance was as usual placed on the grave by her daughter's kindness, each year when received.

Lieutenant Mudge belonged to one of the oldest families of South Devon. I have photographs and new cuttings relating to the family, and carried on a correspondence with his sister until her death some years ago, now.

Some relatives came themselves to South Africa to arrange for memorials to be erected to their dear ones at the Military Cemetery which was established practically on the scene of the actual battlefield on Nooitgedacht.

General Clements had an attractive monument erected to the memory of the men under his command who were killed at the battle. A few years ago it was decided by the South African War Graves Commission (after so many Military Cemeteries in the country had been desecrated) that they would re-enter the remains of the graves in the outlying districts and remove them to the nearby towns. So in this way the graves at Nooitgedacht Military Cemetery were done away with in actual sentiment, but there now stands a symbol in the form of a beautiful new monument which is inscribed "To the Memory of those men who made the supreme sacrifice on December 13th, 1900".

There were two military block houses erected by the British on the top of the Magaliesburg Mountain at Nooitgedacht. Also there is a British block house which is now proclaimed a National Monument which may be seen upon a hill on the side of the road entering the valley of Hekpoort.

It is claimed at this particular place on the roadway that during the early days there was a gateway there, and in this way the farm Hekpoort derived its name. I do not know if this is authentic.

There was one tragic which greatly shocked the neighbourhood of Hekpoort during the period of hostilities of which I was told. A cousin of mine by marriage happened to be in conversation with two British soldiers at her homestead which was situated at Hekpoort when shots rang out, and both men were shot dead in front of her by the Boers. My cousin was so unnerved by this tragic happening, that she was unable to identify the men afterwards, when called upon to do so in connection with the incident.

While my family were still resident in Pretoria after having left Nooitgedacht for safer quarters during hostilities, my mother on occasion met one of the officers of a British regiment who had been on to the farm, and in the course of conversation eagerly enquired as to the state of our home. His reply came promptly in these words: "Why yes Mrs. Hinds, down along the road from your home I met a Tommy with the glass door belonging to your front entrance hall on his head". His purpose of loot probably being to build a fire with the wooden portions of it, and also possessed with that keen sense of destruction which prevailed.

Our home only 6 months old when we left for Pretoria was so destroyed and damaged having practically to be rebuilt.

There were many relics of war found on the battlefield of Nooitgedacht and other places on the farm during the years which followed hostilities. In a ravine near our home a strong iron container containing four big brass shell cases was discovered by my father Harry Hinds. I still have one of these, the others were given to friends. The container renovated with paint has acted as our family bread bin ever since. I much prefer it to the modern ones.

I also have various sizes of solid brass shell cases which were found on the farm at different times. Not long ago a live shell was found embedded in a stone wall which needed repair near the original old homestead at Nooitgedacht. This was promptly handed over to the Military by the occupants there for safe keeping.

Parts of the gun carriages used at the battle of Nooitgedacht are still on the farm. One is dated 1894. Two brass hubs of the carriages I treasure, and have in our home dated 1891. On taking a walk with my Grandmother many years ago, we came upon a big round tin which was so rusted we were unable to open it. We carried it home and found to our disappointment the content was only coarse salt. I think we both had an idea it was something valuable. Brass Tunic buttons and pieces of shattered shell and bullets were often found in the veld and even to this day there is an isolated discovery of some small relic of the war found in the veld.

In a letter dated the 2nd July, 1901, written by Mrs. Heckford (to Mary Jennings, my Grandmother) while on board the "Carisbrooke Castle" when she was returning to England she mentioned: "There are several British Officers on board who have been in the Transvaal, one of them, Lord Chesham, told me "he was with Lord Methman's Column when it came to Hekpoort from Krugersdorp". Also the Mayor of Kimberley with his wife and niece are on board, also a Mrs. Hager, who was in Mafeking during the siege of that town, and it is interesting to hear their account of the two sieges".

My parent had a table and bench which had belonged to the "Scottish Fusiliers" used during the siege of Pretoria during 1880 – 1881. These were dated with the names "Hill and Smith" stamped on the iron legs. The two articles of furniture were in use in our farm kitchen for many years. The bench can now be seen in the Africana Museum in Johannesburg. In a letter to my mother, Augusta Hinds, who made the donation, the Town Clerk remarked "It was an interesting relic", this letter being dated 4th July 1940. The iron legs which supported the original wooden table top are still in constant use on the farm Nooitgedacht.



Muriel Heckford Sanders with some of the relics of the Anglo-Boer War which were found on the farm Nooitgedacht after the "Battle of Nooitgedacht" on 13th December, 1900.

CHAPTER 20

REFUGEES AND HOME AGAIN

To return once again to the George and Harry Hinds families in Pretoria during the Anglo Boer War. They were all unaccustomed to town life and naturally felt very confined.

My mother said she was not so ambitious about the kind of house they were to live in as long as there was a little green grass next to it which would remind her of the farm. Fortunately her wish was granted, and we spent many happy hours on the natural lawn in Pretoria next to our home.

My mother furnished a room as neatly as possible and was able to let it. This helped to pay the rent for the house as times were difficult. My Aunt Sarah also managed to secure a house not far distant from ours, only to get to each other's homes, by a short cut, we had to pass through a narrow lane which we did not appreciate.

Willie and Gladys Hinds were able to attend a school during that time (being the eldest of my Aunt's family) which was necessary and fortunately convenient during our stay in Pretoria.

During this time there was great excitement for us all as my Aunt Sarah (generally known to all relatives and friends as "Tiny") had another baby daughter "fair as a lily" with blue eyes, her young sister Mary and I felt very grown up with this delightful happening. The baby was named Frances.

My Father's Residential Pass during a period during the Anglo Boer War reads:-

Name: Temporary Residential Pass. Vereeniging and District Mr. H. Hinds Dry Goods Store Refugee Camp	Signed U.G. Berelinck Capt.
Stamped Assistant Commissioner's Office Vereeniging 20 th Apr. 1901	

At last it was considered safe after Peace had been signed for the families to return home to their farms. Augusta and Sarah felt it would be advisable for their mother Mary Jennings to remain in Pretoria for a while with relatives, as her health had been causing some anxiety.

With them having to start from the beginning once more, there would be no comfort to offer her at first. So this was decided and arranged accordingly.

Their furniture and other belongings were loaded on Government ox wagons and the two families of George and Harry Hinds travelled back to desolated and ravaged Nooitgedacht, the aftermath of the battle which had taken place on the farm so recently during the December of 1900. I was very young at the time but the picture of returning home stands out clearly in my memory. The veld had been burnt all around

the small brick house where we came to a halt. It was the only building on the farm which could be made habitable. The home we left of only six months standing had been destroyed too badly to repair immediately.

Our belongings were dumped down hastily and with little delay, the driver clapped his whip and drove off on his way back to Pretoria. My Uncle and Aunt found their dwelling house burnt. It had been used as a Hospital during the battle of Nooitgedacht. There was a long barn shaped building which had been used as a wagon shed, and this sheltered the family, later being made more comfortable by making separated partitions in it.

But to both the families it was Home, and with stout courage they carried on. The old servants rejoiced at their return.

My Father heard that some oxen had been allotted to farmers in the district and they would be distributed on a particular day at Hekpoort. Without any conveyance whatsoever he decided to walk the distance which is in the vicinity of 4 miles. On arriving, he found to his disappointment that his name did not appear on the list. Anyhow, he remained to see the outcome of the proceedings, and fortunately one span of oxen was to spare, as the party they were intended for had not arrived to take delivery of them. So it was agreed that my Father could take them over instead.

Late that evening he arrived back at Nooitgedacht with the animals which were in poor condition. He was tired and footsore, but delighted with his good fortune at securing them.

When plans were made for building our home, Mother said her one extravagance would be a big bow window, the full length of the one front room. It has given pleasure to us all ever since. I like to think of the room as my sanctuary. The view this same window affords is a good view of the farm, then the patchwork lands of agriculture at Hekpoort, with the Witwatersrand Mountain Range as background.

My cousins Will, Gladys, Mary and Frances Hinds meant a great deal to me being an only child and being so nearly related we seemed like one big family and our lives have remained closely linked ever since.

Our old friend Mrs. Heckford was Gladys's Godmother, and my parents had chosen the name Heckford as my second name. She was appreciated by the family firstly as Governess to my Mother and Aunt, and later as a life long friend to us all.

CHAPTER 21

REMINISCENCES OF SCHOOL LIFE AT NOOITGEDACHT

As things on the farm became more settled our parents had to face the problem of our education. There were no schools in the country districts at the time, so it was decided we were to have a governess.

A cousin Constance Jennings, with teaching ability who lived with her parents at Hekpoort, kindly consented to take the post. My Aunt Sarah would accommodate her and had a room available to be used as our schoolroom, with some adorable “Bentwood” chairs to sit on. It was arranged that she would be fetched and taken back every week.

Her transport was a Cape Cart drawn by two oxen, at this time no horses were available. The distance was four miles to Hekpoort. I am only sorry no photographs were taken of our School transport, which caused much attraction en route, and continuous amusement to the occupants and hoops of delights from us, when Fridays arrived and we saw my Uncle and Connie drive off, knowing we were free to indulge in the wonderful things to do that Nooitgedacht held in store for us, and we had planned during the week.

Gladys, Mary and I were her pupils, and we were to be taught music as well. I, was considered too young for this, Childlike, I displayed my disappointment and indignation thinking it surely was Connie who was to blame for the decision.

Later in life I so well remember her remarking to me: “Muriel, you have grown so much nicer than when you were a little girl!” So most likely, my behaviour was not as elegant and polite as might have been desired sometimes at the tender age of 5 years. Anyhow this never marred our friendship for each other, which remained steadfast throughout the years of her short life.

Later we had quite a succession of Governesses, there was a Miss Swan, who later left us to marry Mr. William Nourse, brother of the well known Henry Nourse.

Miss Judd was one of the teachers, followed by a Miss Surridge. Both were straight from England before filling the post.

Two of our cousins from Hekpoort, Winifred and Arthur Jennings joined us as scholars at the Nooitgedacht school. Winnie as she was always known to us was a weekly boarder at my Aunt Sarah’s home. Arthur rode on horseback from Hekpoort each day, calling first at our home where he would have breakfast with us and afterwards I would accompany him to school.

My pony was a pretty brown mare named “Lassie”. She had been a gift to me from one of my Father’s friends. She was young and spirited, and Arthur preferred to ride her, and I would ride his horse who boasted the name of “Ou Gom”. He was exactly what his name implied. At first I felt rather in awe of Arthur, but as time went on we understood each other and became good friends, enjoying the early morning ride together. Many a laugh we had during later years of those happy days. How my Aunt put up with us all is beyond my imagination. I am sure we must have been very trying to her at times. Our delight knew no bounds when the bell rang for tea break.

I fear we were rather boisterous, and made a frantic rush for the dining room where our tea and refreshments were served. I still have visions of delicious home baked bread spread thick with butter and golden syrup, that much used “domestic glue”. After tea there was a dash for the bedroom to wash our hands, for those were the days of water jugs and basins on a wash stand in each bedroom. No water was available unless fetched from the large furrow near the house. Servants carried it in large shining buckets for household purposes. An impressive sight was native girls walking with the buckets of water on their heads. Never a drop would spill out.

Arthur’s greatest delight was to invariably splash each one of us girls with the damp towel as we scrambled back to the school room. I don’t remember my Aunt ever complaining about our behaviour, she certainly had a great deal of patience.

Miss Surridge was an excellent teacher but most eccentric in many ways. She had an idea she could only drink water fetched from the stream flowing directly from the mountain, which was an uphill walk from the homestead a good $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile. She decided that we, her pupils, would fetch this water for her each day. We took it in turn going in pairs, on hot summer days the walking was arduous, and often we cheated, drawing the water from a much lower part of the stream that she wished it. I don’t think our prank was ever found out as the water was equally crystal clear all the way down to the house. Much to our amused delight we gloated in this united youthful conspiracy.

Miss Surridge had a pet fox terrier named “squerry” and he was privileged to share her bed whenever she wished, which was practically the whole day long! Otherwise he was curled up, sleeping on her lap.

My childhood picture of this particular Governess, is of her being attired in a pale pink blouse and black skirt, with a huge black bow adorning the blouse across her bosom! A stoutish figure with a pleasant face and kindly.

We had several Governesses during those years. They seemed to find life lonely and became restless after a while.

It was decided after some time that my parents would board the Governess and have the School at their home at “The Fountains”.

They had no suitable room for the purpose, so my father enclosed a portion of our side verandah with canvas which served the purpose very well.

At this stage Gladys Hinds and Winnie and Arthur Jennings had left for Boarding school so there was only Mary, Frances and me left as pupils. Our Governess at this stage was a Miss Beckerleg. We were fond of her. She was companionable and interested in us. She prepared us for a concert, and rehearsals were exciting. It was a “Red Letter” evening for all. Guests and audience consisted of relatives and friends from Hekpoort.

We acted the play “Cinderella”, I took the part of “Prince Charming” and I seem to remember every detail of the costume I wore, which my mother had so cleverly made for me to wear at the performance. The outfit was pale blue, my very large hat made of the same material, had for adornment a lovely white ostrich plume! Black patent

leather shoes boasted great shiny buckles! Similar to those worn on shoes at the present day!

I have the original copy of our Concert Programme which reads as follows:

PROGRAMME

Musical Drill		Misses Mary, Muriel and Frances Hinds.
Pianoforte Solo	"Riversong"	Miss Mary Hinds.
Part Song	"Sweet and Low"	The Misses Hinds.
Part Song	"Home Sweet Home"	The Misses Hinds.
Recitation	"When a Woman I Am"	Miss Frances Hinds.
Part Song	"Way down upon the Swanee River"	The Misses Hinds.
Recitation	"Uncle Podger"	Miss Muriel Hinds.
Song	"Thora"	Mr. E. Jennings.
Play	"Cinderella"	The Misses Hinds.

Interval of 15 minutes

Pianoforte	"Womens' Musicals"	Miss Mary Hinds.
Action Song	"Dolly's Goodnight"	Miss Frances Hinds.
Action Song	"Dickey's Journey"	Miss Muriel and Frances Hinds.
Action Song	"Nobody Else"	Miss G. Hinds.
Action Song	"Hansel and Gretel"	Muriel & Frances Hinds.
Play	"Granny's Picture"	Muriel & Frances Hinds.
Part Song	"Oh Rest in The Lord"	The Misses Hinds.
	"Goodnight"	The Misses Hinds.
	God Save the king	

The Concert was a wonderful success and Miss Beckerleg was congratulated on preparing us.

After Miss Beckerleg left, a Mrs. Harvey was our Governess for a short while only. One evening after her arrival, my Mother sat down at the piano and played some of her favourite tunes for her own amusement as she was accustomed to do at times. She was a talented pianist and played either classical or other music with ease.

Mrs. Harvey, on hearing the music, became greatly upset and agitated, and told my Parents "That it would be impossible for her to continue teaching her pupils music as was arranged, as she had misrepresented her capabilities as a Music Teacher, and wished to leave as soon as possible". Nothing would dissuade her of her decision and she left "Nooitgedacht" soon afterwards. Then followed a Mrs. Wall, quite a character in herself, and most eccentric, but unsatisfactory in other ways.

I have omitted to mention two other teachers my cousins and I had earlier on, these being a Miss Oliver, and a Miss Long. So at least we had great variety in personalities. My Cousin Mary and I finished our education at the Anglican Church School of St. Michaels' Bloemfontein.

Being away from home we enjoyed being together, and shared our experiences of each day, and had the privilege of adjoining cubicles in the Dormitory which was pleasing. I am deeply grateful for the kindness and especial care I received at the school. Suffering from back trouble I had gymnasium exercises every day together with another pupil, and a nightly massage of half an hour by a Sister Lilian, who to me, seemed one of the gentlest, and kindest woman, I had ever known. I always thought of her as "Angelic". A profile, which looked as if it had been carved from marble, she certainly touched my young impressive mind, with the way she treated me. I was prevented from taking part in games which I naturally resented, but was to my benefit.

Mary left school first, and some time later I came home as well, at the age of 15 years.

The Teaching Sisters at St. Michaels School were anxious that I should remain and continue my studies, but it was rather a financial strain for my parents to keep me at school, so it was decided otherwise, and I returned to "Nooitgedacht" the end of term. Of the family of cousins, Frances, was the only one still at school at home, after we had left for boarding school. Her Governess was a Miss Goodliff. Later when she left a Miss Leaman came, the latter married Reginald Scrooby, a friend of ours who lived at Skeerpoort.

CHAPTER 22**HAPPY DAYS OF OUR YOUTH**

Then followed some very happy years for us all after having finished our education.

Being young, pleasure for ever foremost in our thoughts but transport was quite a problem! We found much enjoyment in horseback riding together. Twice a week was our "Post Day" so we made ourselves useful by arranging to fetch the mail on these especial days. My cousins would call for me, or we would meet at the "Crossroads" on the farm which was a favourite expression. I generally rode "Lassie" my own pony, and "Lady" was Mary or Frances' mount. These animals enjoyed the outing as much as we did! We rode on side saddles, and took great pride in them, and our bridles, keeping them well polished and bright.

Our riding habits were home made, but fitted very well. Mine was a navy blue serge, with these we wore white shirt blouses with pretty neck ties. One which I particularly fancied had a hand painted horse head on it!

To carry our parcels of mail, each of us had a saddle bag of leather, which strapped onto the saddle for convenience.

The "Post Office" was a room used for that purpose at the Hekpoort Police Station where the present Barrack still is. The Postmistress being a Miss Steyn. The Post would arrive by Cape Cart driven by a Mr. du Toit, who had a pair of reliable, strong horses for the purpose. It was fetched from Magaliesburg Station, a distance of over 12 miles over rough roads. Often we had to wait a considerable time before the Post Cart arrived, but we found it pleasant meeting friends and relatives there. Often important items of news were exchanged, and we were entrusted with delivering messages to our Parents.

On our homeward ride it was an understanding agreement that we would call at our Great Uncle Jeremiah Jennings' home, and what a cheery welcome was always in store for us there! Preparations were made by Aunt Annie, or one of the many girls of the family, for us to share a welcome cup of tea with them and enjoy a cheery chat. There would be happy fun and laughter, and an exchanging of family news with various messages for our parents from them before we set off again, starting the horses off on a quick walk to be followed very soon by a gallop.

The sun would be setting in all its colourful beauty. It seemed to dip down just over the Magaliesburg Mountain as we would have our last enjoyable canter before reaching home, feeling greatly refreshed after the outing, and certainly looking forward to the evening meal. There was always such a cheery welcome awaiting me at home, and when "Lassie" was off-saddled and attended to for the night, I would be ready to tell Gran and my parents all the items of news we had gathered from relatives at Hekpoort.

We were home taught to do needlework, and various types of fancywork, and gradually felt confident enough to make our own clothes. My Grandmother gave each Granddaughter a "Singer" sewing machine. Mine was bought during the year 1916, and has been in service ever since, and has never needed repair throughout the 56 years I have owned it! I don't think she could have thought of anything more

useful for us girls. Gran was a fine example to all, in her quiet dignified manner. One seldom found her idle, generally busily engaged with her needlework or knitting. Her eyesight was very good fortunately, and she indulged in a great deal of reading. We loved to gather in her bedroom where there was always a "Homely nook" with a pretty pot plant to add to the attraction of the room and give her pleasure. A Tennis Court at "Nooitgedacht" afforded my cousins and I, and our friends, many happy hours. Saturdays were generally earmarked for us to have some exciting games there.

I had a walk home afterwards of about a mile. There would always be that eagerness of playing "just another set"! I fancy I must have caused my folks at home some uneasiness on occasions coming home at dusk. Only now I realise what my youthful thoughtlessness must have caused them in anxiety!

There were often Tennis Tournaments arranged with our Hekpoort relatives and friends taking part, and refreshments were served at the court. Delicious cake with a cup of tea, and social chatter, are memories I hold of those pleasant days at my Aunt Sarah's home. Dances were a popular form of entertainment. There were those held at private houses, amongst the different relatives and friends of Hekpoort and Magaliesburg, and others for raising funds. The "Hartley Bros." Tobacco Factory was in full swing at this particular time, and they had a very large room in the buildings which was used when required by their kindness. This was at "Vaalbank". Most successful and enjoyable dances were held there, and "sit down" suppers were catered for. It was a journey of 12 miles by oxwagon to "Vaalbank" from "Nooitgedacht". Our parents went to endless trouble to please us, and would accompany the party entering into the enjoyment of the evening as much as we young folks did!

A "21st Birthday Party" dance was held at Skeerpoort. The young lady celebrating her coming of age was Ada Sussons, daughter of a family living there. It was a "redletter" evening for all friends in the valley. Elaborate preparations had been made and her father's big shed was suitably decorated for the occasion. We all dressed in our especial evening frocks, and Ada was undoubtedly the "Belle of the Ball" in a lovely pale pink frock for the occasion.

Surprise parties were often arranged and enjoyed. The young folk would meet and decide who was to be visited. Each party would arrive at the appointed homestead laden with refreshments they had brought to be enjoyed during the course of the evening.

The "Lady of the house" took it all as a matter of course that the dining room furniture would hurriedly be removed in preparation for dancing! Most of the homes had pianos, and it generally was not difficult to find a willing pianist to provide the necessary and popular dance tunes of the time.

"The Lancers" were often arranged, and danced at that time, and what a lovely youthful romp we would make of them! There was plenty of fun and laughter, as each one contributed to make it a happy and successful evening. Gymkhana Sports meetings were especially excited.

I remember attending one held at Magaliesburg, and also one at Hekpoort during my girlhood. Our parents and ourselves spent weeks in planning and organising the

different events for the great day, and arranging what refreshments would be useful. We particularly enjoyed the "Thread and Needle" race played with horseback riders. Each lady would have a mounted partner of the male sex, she would be ready with the others, holding a needle each, and the gentlemen would race up together, delivering the thread to their lady partners. Then there was a frantic effort to get the needles threaded, and given back and the riders would race to the winning post in excitement. Then there were ordinary horse races, "Tent pegging" and "Lemon Slicing". The horses were as excited as their mounts. Some very nice prizes were won for the events.

CHAPTER 23

DAILY ROUTINE AND INCIDENTS AT NOOITGEDACHT

Often rain set in for several days, rivers flooded and were impassable, as there were no high erected bridges as we now have, instead in the drifts “plenty of mud”. It meant being marooned at “Nooitgedacht” for days until the flood waters had subsided! Bad wash away occurred at times, and the mail bags would be considerably delayed en route from Magaliesburg to the Hekpoort Post Office in consequence. There was no church in our nearby vicinity to attend. After the Anglo Boer War, St. Thomas’ Anglican Church at Thorndale was so badly ruined that it could not be used for services anymore.

Arrangements were made after the congregation had discussed the situation, for services to be held once a month at the home of my Great Uncle Jeremiah Jennings, who lived in Hekpoort. The Clergyman would arrive at Magaliesburg early Sunday morning, by train service, where he was met by my Uncle. They would then travel to Hekpoort in a horse drawn cart. The service would then be conducted in the large family dining room, and Eugene Jennings, the eldest son, would play the Hymns on the piano.

We all appreciated what this family did to make it possible for the community to have these religious services.

I shall always remember the cheery welcome this aged couple with their family gave us on arrival on these especial Sundays. Congregations were encouraging, and it was a happy gathering. Gladys Hinds became engaged to James Roderick Mavor, and plans were being made for the wedding, which it was decided should take place at “Nooitgedacht”. It was to be the first marriage in our younger generation, so we girls were greatly excited in anticipation of the pretty frocks we should wear for the occasion! There was the preparation for Gladys’ trousseau of pretty clothing which was to be mad “at home”, and then there was the “Glory Box” which one so eagerly wishes to see filled up! We all contributed to that, in various items of fancywork. My Grandmother doing a fare share in her industrious way. Mary, Frances and I all wished to look our best for the wedding. Pretty dainty materials were chosen for our frocks, and my Mother and Aunt and ourselves, set about dress making in earnest, Fortunately for us our parents had years of experience, and were able to please our youthful ideas with quite a professional tendency of dressmaking. The 25th March 1913 was a bright sunny day for the marriage, and the setting for the Ceremony and Reception afterwards was a credit to all who endeavoured to make it all look attractive. Flowers, fresh from the home gardens were placed in large bowls everywhere to make it look a festive occasion.

Gladys made a lovely bride, she was such a pretty girl, with a clear complexion and cheeks naturally tinted with a delicate pink colour at all times, tall and slightly built, with a sweet expressive smile. Roddy, a handsome groom with laughing blue eyes and jet black hair!

Standing together they made an impressive pair waiting “in confidence” to make the sacred vows of the marriage service on that sunny day. It was a happy day for us all. My Uncle George and Aunt Sarah offered their guests true “South African hospitality”, which was enjoyed for several hours. There were no motor cars at this

time and the gathering of friends and relatives had all travelled to “Nooitgedacht” by horse drawn carts and oxwagons!

Each year during the Winter months the cattle herds from the two farms of “Nooitgedacht” were trekked to the Bushveld to the warmer climate and the change of grazing.

My Uncle George Hinds owned two lovely farms. These were named “Stratford” and “Hampton”. It was here that the herds spent a few months of every year. The two brothers George and Harry Hinds would enjoy to accompany the trek. There was good game shooting, and they were able to bring home a good supply of “biltong” afterwards, having dried the surplus meat that was not required for their everyday meals in camp life.

My Aunt and Mother with my cousins and I, went to the Bushveld for a holiday as well, travelling by oxwagon. These were comfortably equipped with a full tent or half tent which provided our sleeping quarters for the journey, and in camp. The horses travelled with us, and to vary the monotony of jolting along the wagon, we would take it in turn to ride the horses and canter out ahead of the trek and then await the arrival of the wagon. Sitting around the camp fires at night was something we looked forward to, delighted to hear of the many experiences our parents would tell us of, in that quiet restfulness of the Bushveld, where there was enough time to relax and be at ease. When news came through that rain had fallen sufficiently at “Nooitgedacht” plans would be made to return home to the farm.

The very small calves were loaded on the wagons for transport. It was a joyous sight to see the herds pass by, and arrive once again to their familiar haunts on the farm. Then there was plenty of milk, and the usual routine of hand milking done by the servants, the milk separated had to be attended to each day regularly. My mother used to be up very early to supervise this herself and to see that the cream was kept in a cool place. At one period, I remember, 60 lbs of butter was being produced from our very mixed herd of cattle! Some of the cows being good milkers. The dairy was a “Block House” as used by the British during the “Anglo Boer War” during activities at the battle of “Nooitgedacht”. My father had brought the material from the top of the Magaliesburg Mountain and had re-erected it exactly as it had been used for Military purposes. It proved ideal for the purpose, always remaining very cool, with the thick stone wall around. Churning was done in a large “End over end” barrel type churn, and later the butter was well worked through a large “butter worker” and pounded. The following morning very early, it was packed ready for dispatch, and conveyed by horse cart to Magaliesburg Station to catch the early train for the Krugersdorp Market.

The Farmers’ Association of the “Valley and Magaliesburg” was very active and keen under the Chairmanship of Mr. Frank Mawer, a cousin of mine by marriage. One very successful “Show” of farming produce etc. was held. There were a splendid number of exhibits. My mother, Augusta Hinds, was awarded first prize for her butter in the Dairy section much to her surprise. All farmers grew their own vegetables, and any surplus was marketed.

Pumpkin, Sweet potatoes and Potatoes were grown in large quantities and were considered a good standby for use in the various homes. Wheat and Mealies were milled for use, the farmer producing “Boer Meal” from which all bread was made at

this time, the mealie meal formed the main ration for native servants. With plenty of fresh milk, they were always satisfied with the stiffly made "Mealie Pap"!

The "Old Stone" grinding Mill at Hekpoort was operated by a turbine, worked by water supplied from a canal leading from the Magalies River, and was owned by Jeremiah Jennings. It was a familiar sight to see this old uncle of mine, walking home from the Mill each day, wearing a light summer jacket with a good sprinkling of meal on his clothing after a morning's work there.

CHAPTER 24

THE DARK CLOUDS OF REBELLION AND THE GREAT WAR I

A new homestead had been built at “Nooitgedacht” further up towards the mountain and below the “Gorge” of the Magaliesburg Range, where the water course naturally flows in a strong stream of crystal clear water.

To this modern dwelling Willie Hinds (eldest and only son of George and Sarah Hinds) brought his bride in the January of 1914. They had been married at Enid Bartlett’s home village of “Tylden” in the Queenstown district, Cape Province.

Her mother, before her marriage to Walter Bartlett, was Ada Jennings, youngest daughter of James and Sarah Jennings, who had lived at “Nooitgedacht” while in her teens, with her parents in the little house on the Western side of the farm described previously.

Enid was the eldest of the family, and an only daughter. Her two brothers, Lydford and Roston, were much younger than she was.

After finishing her education, Enid accompanied her Governess, Miss Long, on a tour overseas. She was a dainty girl, played the piano well, and was also artistically inclined in painting. The young couple had planned their home a perfect “replica” only much smaller, of her parents home on their farm “Glengarry”, Cape Province. So when coming to live at “Nooitgedacht” after marriage, their own home must have reminded her a great deal of the one she had left 600 miles away.

The loveliest “Pansy” violets I have ever seen were grown in their garden, so near the shelter of the Magaliesburg Mountain. I have happy recollections of gathering huge bunches of these fragrant little flowers on frequent occasions when visiting Will and Enid Hinds.

Life went on very peacefully at “Nooitgedacht” and the “Fountains” until at last there were rumours of unrest, and it seemed that rebellion was imminent.

My father, Harry Hinds, although well on in years, was one of the first to volunteer for Military Service. He joined General De La Rey’s Commando together with others of our family relatives in the district, and was anxious to be one of those selected to go to “German West Africa”. It so happened that he only got as far as Cape Town, much to his disappointment, there his medical doctor turned him down as being “unfit for Active Service”! Instead he underwent a serious operation to his ear. After this my Father was sent to Johannesburg Hospital for treatment. So his keen hopes were shattered and he had to come home eventually. I always thought it was a valiant gesture on his part to have entertained the idea of going on “Commando” at all, as he was never a robust man, and quite elderly at the time, and it was not expected of him. When the first scare of Rebellion was on, but after my Father had already left home and joined De La Rey’s Commando, my Grandmother, mother and myself, were aroused and greatly alarmed one morning very early, to see a number of men on horseback, riding around our home at the farm. Eventually, one of the men dismounted his horse, and strode up the garden path and knocked at our front door, and when my mother opened it, said they wished to see “Oom Harry” as my father was known to our Afrikaans neighbours.

My mother then told them he had left the farm and was already on Commando. So ended quite a frightening experience for us.

When recruits were being called for, and there were only a few Officers stationed at "Booyens" near Johannesburg for the purpose of enlisting men for active service, my husband "to be", Collin Sanders, was one of the many to volunteer. When he arrived there to do so, he was advised to report again the following week!

This he did, and joined the 2nd Battalion of "Transvaal Scottish" Regiment immediately. This Regiment took an active part in all the skirmishes in the country for many months, and they were drafted from place to place wherever required.

While at Kimberley, Collin met my Father, who was with "De La Rey's Commando" as I have mentioned, and they exchanged experiences. Eventually the troops were greeted with the welcome news that they were to go to German South West Africa, so their keen excitement mounted. The 2nd Battalion Transvaal Scottish boarded the "Galway Castle" and after a pleasant voyage and eager anticipation of meeting the enemy, they arrived at "Walfish Bay". The soldiers spent quite a while there awaiting developments and advance orders. To quote from a Post Card written on the 12.02.1915 from Collin, while in the trenches three miles inland from the town, "We are the advance Regiment, and should see some fighting. General Botha is expected some time this week. Wind blowing and the sand is blinding." The Regiment moved on to "Swakopmund" on the 31.05.1915, where they arrived in the early hours of the morning to find the Germans had evacuated the town shortly before their arrival.

Some of the houses were found to have their breakfast tables ready laid for the meal!

One can picture the hurried disorder those homes must have presented, and the riot which must have taken place in the town during that day!

Collin was stationed with seven men on the beach, and was one of those who took part in hauling down the "German Flag" and hoisting the "Union Jack" in its place on one of the buildings of which I have a picture postcard he had sent me from there.

Once there was a three weeks leave for Collin, who came back to Cape Town on the Hospital Ship "Ebani". He was suffering from an injured elbow, and arrived in Port on the 29. 03.1916.

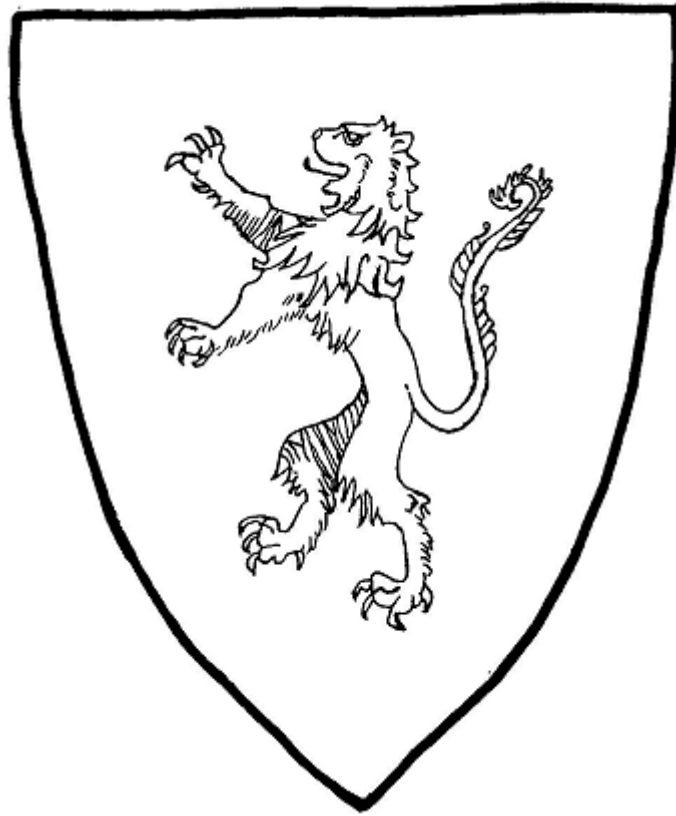
It was a short visit, but having been away so many long months in the field it was greatly appreciated by himself, relatives and friends alike.

We had corresponded with each other throughout the campaign and I had knitted socks, and sent gifts and comforts to the soldiers, and so many others did at that time. Naturally we were pleased to see each other again!

After the return of the Troops from Overseas, and South West Africa, and when all gradually became settled and peaceful after so many long anxious years of war, the young farmers came back to their homes in the "Hekpoort Valley" and took up the usual routine of work. In their absence those left behind carried on to the best of their ability.



*Gerald James Sanders,
father of Collin Sanders,
and his sisters and brothers.*



Sanders

CHAPTER 25

WEDDING BELLS AT “THE FOUNTAINS” NOOITGEDACHT

My cousins were all grown up, as I was then, and Will and Gladys Hinds married as I have mentioned.

Roddy and Gladys Mavor had made their home on a farm named “Digger’s Rest” in the Northern Transvaal and were happily settled, but rather isolated from any nearby neighbours. They already had a young son “Donald” and a baby daughter “Vera”. So Mary Jennings had two Great-Grandchildren, and she had found great pleasure in knitting their baby garments, doing the finest work although well into her seventies!

On August 18th, 1918, I became engaged to Collin Smith Sanders. There was great excitement at “The Fountains”, we had known each other for many years, and felt confident that whatever the years to come held in store for us, we would be happy companions and face our adversities together.

Our first thought afterwards was that we wanted Uncle George and Aunt Sarah with all their family to know our news, so we walked to “Nooitgedacht” with our glad tidings, one and all seemed very pleased.

We celebrated with a nice “cup of tea”, and had to put up with a lot of teasing in consequence! A few days after this, we heard the sound of a motorbike early, before we had breakfasted, and it was Collin with my engagement ring! I was delighted with it, and my family thought he had made a very good choice. I’ve always felt happy to think it was entirely Collin’s own choice, and had come as such a surprise. Strangely the families Sanders, Jennings, and Hinds had always been well acquainted. They had often met for pleasure and for business, all being of farming stock too.

One of my Grandfather William Jennings’ documents was signed by W.H. Sanders who was Collin Sanders’ Great Uncle who lived near Magaliesburg being a School teacher there for many years. The family was also from 1820 settler stock.

John Sanders, aged 30 years, together with his wife Martha aged 27 years came out from England with the Cocks Party on board the steamer “Weymouth”. The family originated from London. Collins’ Great Grandfather was a Captain in the British Navy who spent many years at sea.

George, Collin and Charlotte Sanders grew up at Krugersdorp and were educated there, the two boys finishing their education at Marist Bros. College at Uitenhage. Collin started work at the French Rand Gold Mining Company, and when the mine was on the point of closing down, he joined the staff of Reduction Workers at the West Rand Consolidated Mines, Krugersdorp.

Here Collin Sanders worked for 8 years previous to starting his farming career at “Fountains” Nooitgedacht.

My father suggested to Collin that if we cared to settle on the farm after marriage, as the family had always hoped, it might be advisable for him to start farming without delay.

My Father's health at the time was causing some anxiety, and he said he would be glad of his help.

So this was decided, and in this way Collin came to live at the farm during the April of 1919. Our marriage was arranged for the 18th October, of the same year.

Plans were already being made for the wedding. My mother particularly wished that the Rev. Archdeacon Roberts of Pretoria, who was an old friend of the family should conduct our marriage service.

There was no church in the district at the time, and transport was difficult, as only horse drawn vehicles were being used on the farm.

Archdeacon Roberts gladly consented to my mothers' wish and when told of the problem said "Why, I could marry the young couple wherever convenient at your own home". So it was at once decided this way.

It was quite an unusual Wedding, our little "Sanctuary" was the corner of the front verandah. Friends kindly spent the morning to make it all look attractive for the Ceremony.

Wild Asparagus from the veld gathered the afternoon before, was entwined around the verandah pillars with pretty bunches of fresh flowers intermingled amongst the greenery. A small table with a snow white cloth, was placed across the corner, and crystal glass vases arranged with beautiful flowers were placed on it, and this served the purpose very well. It was here in this simple setting that we were married. Our guests were seated on chairs and benches down each side of the wide verandah. The flower garden was gay with Spring Flowers, and these were masses of Purple Irises in full bloom. My floral sheaf of "Madonna Lilies" were freshly picked from our own garden that early morning, and was artistically arranged by a kind friend. My wedding veil, a very lovely one, was offered to me for the occasion belonging to one of my friends. Traditionally this is supposed to be lucky!

Mary Hinds, my cousin and girlhood companion made a charming Bridesmaid in her pretty frock of "Lemon" coloured Georgette material trimmed with the tiniest white beads. This frock was beautifully made by Mary and her mother at home, and was a credit to their dressmaking abilities.

It was indeed a "labour of love" to have stitched on all those beads! I did appreciate their work. Aubrey de Villiers, who lived at "Kromdraai" near Krugersdorp, was a friend of ours, and kindly consented to act as Collin's Bestman. We always like to think that our wedding day may have been responsible for Aubrey and Mary's engagement which was announced soon afterwards!

An informal friendly "Reception" was held in our Dining Room after the marriage ceremony was solemnised, and later Collin and I were given a very happy "Send off".

A cousin, Percy Pitt, from Potchefstroom kindly motored us to Krugersdorp Station, and we left by train for Johannesburg. The following morning leaving for Parys.

At home our parents had arranged a dance for that evening for any guests who cared to stay over to wind up the festivities with a good old country dance!



Collin Smith Sanders with his Triumph Motor Bike at the age of 18 years

CHAPTER 26

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FAMILY

My Great Grandparents "Hinds" originally lived on a farm "Poplar Grove" near Wittlesea, Cape Colony. Thomas Charles Hinds, my Grandfather, grew up on this farm, later marrying Emma Cooper of "Port Elizabeth". Great Grandfather Cooper was claimed to be the first resident there to own a Cape Cart and pair of horses!

My recollection of my Grandfather Hinds was that of a tall, well built, and rather handsome man, with blue eyes, a stern expression, but kindly manner, and snow white hair and beard. My Grandmother, Emma Hinds (nee Cooper), was born at Port Elizabeth on the 28th June, 1828. She was small in stature and slight, and had a very sweet gentle nature and voice. The couple celebrated their marriage at St. Mary's Methodist Church, Port Elizabeth, on the 2nd April, 1849.

Thomas and Emma Hinds, after their marriage, made their home at "Tarkastad" Cape Colony, living there for a considerable number of years where they reared a large family of six sons and two daughters.

The names of the Hinds family were:- Thomas Charles; George William; Sarah; Harry Clement; Alfred; Emma; Frederick; and Edward Percival.

During the year 1868, Thomas and Emma Hinds with their family moved to the Transvaal making their home at Potchefstroom, where they lived practically for the rest of their lives, with the exception of short sojourns to "Blaauwbank" where they stayed for some time with their eldest son Tom and his wife Alice, and at times with other members of the family. The large family of boys and two girls grew up and were educated at Potchefstroom.

Thomas and Emma Hinds celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on the 2nd April 1899. They received congratulations at "Blaauw Bank Junction". This was where the present "Magaliesburg Hotel" stands today.

A well worded address was written and presented to them on the occasion by a friend Mr. F. Beer, who lived in the locality then.

I have a copy of this recording, the memorable day of celebration. This elderly couple lived to also celebrate their "Diamond Wedding" having spent a happy life together of 60 years and 6 months. They used to boast that they had never had a quarrel and were truly devoted to each other. Both Thomas and Emma Hinds were loyal members of the Methodist Church and certainly lived their ideals of religion.

My Grandmother was a Sunday School teacher for a great number of years, and later during the year 1888 at the request of the "ladies of the Congregation" of the church at Potchefstroom was appointed the Conductorship of the "Ladies Society Class". She faithfully fulfilled her duties although often with much physical weakness and disability.

Emma Hinds died at the age of 81 years on the 27th October 1909. Her husband Thomas Hinds spent his last days at "Nooitgedacht" staying with his son George and his wife Sarah. His death took place on the 22nd July 1911. My father "Harry

Clement” one of their sons, was born at Tarkastad, Cape Colony, on August 30th, 1863.

He was of medium height, and slight and wiry, in a way resembling his mother more than his father. Kind, unselfish, and good natured, he gladly deprived himself of anything for the sake of others. He loved company, and always had a cheery welcome for visitors.

My father’s native name was “Kgwehane” which means, I believe, “One who walks quickly”. Harry Clement Hinds, as a boy, attended the Potchefstroom District School.

I have a book presented to him as a prize during his student years at the age of 15 years. It has this inscription on the front page:-

Transvaal – Potchefstroom District School
Government Prize. Christmas 1878
This handsome volume is presented to :-
Master H. Hinds
as the first prize in the 1 B Class
for all ed. Branches
and as a reward for diligence
Good Conduct, General progress,
and regular attendance as incentive
to further exertion
1. Vacey Lyle M.D.
Superintendent General of Education

My father passed away peacefully in his sleep at the age of 70 years on the 18th October 1933 at the “Fountains” Nooitgedacht. This date happened to be the 14th Anniversary of our Wedding day.

I was fortunate to have known all my uncles and aunts on the Hinds side. I have many happy memories of association with them all.

CHAPTER 27

JOYFUL TIDINGS

“Nooitgedacht” was the scene of another wedding when my Cousin Mary Hinds was married to Aubrey Theodore De Villiers on the 10th July 1920.

We were all pleased and happy about this event in the family, and enjoyed an impressive Anglican Marriage Service conducted by the Rev. Urquhart of Krugersdorp.

Once again friend and relatives gathered in that homely and well loved atmosphere at “Nooitgedacht” to celebrate the occasion and wish all concerned “Good Luck” and Congratulations. The Bride was radiant with happiness, and her sister Bridesmaid Frances Hinds pretty, with her fair hair and youthfulness. Afterwards Aubrey and Mary de Villiers settled and made their home at Hekpoort on the farm “Lyndhurst” as it is known today where they lived for some time.

On the 4th September 1920, the same year, our eldest son, Errol Collin, was born, and the excitement in the family at “The Fountains” Nooitgedacht, knew no bounds!

My father had always had a secret longing for a son, but his wish had never been realised, as I was an only child, a girl!

He happened to be down at the Bushveld farms when the news reached him that he was a Grandfather!

He came home post haste to welcome his young Grandson, and well do I remember how proud he was of this chubby baby boy, with the satisfaction of at last having a son in the family.

Farming activities were mainly Agricultural – wheat, oats, mealies, tobacco and occasionally kaffircorn and beans were grown. After a few years my husband, Collin, purchased a property at Hekpoort, and worked this in conjunction with the lands at “Nooitgedacht”. We have always referred to the property at Hekpoort as “The Erven”. Some years before our ownership, a relative of President Paul Kruger had lived there and is buried in the nearby vicinity.

All ploughing was done by oxen and of these we had three spans and more, what beautiful animals they were!

I used to delight in watching the ploughing and to see the two front oxen with a command from the native driver, taking a turn so intelligently all on their own without a voorloper! Our young oxen which were ready for taming and training for team work were generally given out to local Afrikaans farmers to train for a period of one year.

Normally it takes about three months for the animals to tame, and for the rest of the year the farmer concerned was able to use them for his own work, in payment for the trouble he had gone to in taming the oxen for farm work generally. I once witnessed some young oxen that had been previously collected from the veld, and were being caught for the first time prior to an attempt to try and inspan some of them.

One young ox, a beautiful Afrikaner animal, after displaying great rage in being controlled, eventually simply dropped dead. A case of heart failure from intense shock I should imagine.

It is not an easy task to train young oxen, and it requires a great deal of patience, understanding and careful handling.

Animals like humans, have their individual natures. A good trainer would study the oxen, a love of animals would be an advantage too. One young farmer my husband entrusted young oxen with for training, gave great satisfaction returning the spans in good condition and quite docile and manageable. This was proof that they had been treated kindly and with care. On the farm our native drivers, Paul, Frans, Elifas and John were each responsible for their own particular span of oxen, together with the trek gear which consisted of Yokes, Skeys, Reins and Stroops (using the usual Afrikaans terms so familiar to all in South Africa).

Each driver was supplied with a long Bamboo stick and with this a very “especial” whip was made which these native boys handled very cleverly, directing the oxen with a sharp clap, or the slightest touch from it. They had a most intriguing way of calling out the oxen’s names when they wished to alert them, the animals each knowing their own names. The natives Paul and Frans kept their equipment in first class order, but John who was of the Xhosa tribe, well known for their untidiness, was just the reverse!

His great love for the animals he worked with seemed to make up for his disinterest in the trek gear. Each of the oxen were given a name, and what a vocabulary these boys seemed to have at their disposal.

Generally a sleek red or pure black ox would be named “Mooiman”, others commonly heard and which come to my mind are “Bles”, “Witpens”, “Ringhals” and “Baatom” which seem to find a place in most spans of the farming community. The oxen had to be collected from the veld each morning at an early hour after dawn.

It was an interesting sight to watch the inspanning. Each ox, when called by name would come forward in turn, and then be sectioned off in pairs to be harnessed with a yoke and skeys. The rein stroops looped around underneath the neck of the animal and adjusted accordingly completed the harnessing ready for going on trek or ploughing. The front and hind oxen had the most responsible positions in a team, and were taught exactly what was expected of them, and at the slightest command from the native driver the oxen respond instantly. Collin, my husband, recollects a delightful incident which shows how intelligent these animals are.

It was a rule when the sun tipped down behind the Magaliesburg Mountain at sunset the oxen that were ploughing or doing other work in the lands would pull out and finish for the day ready for outspanning. On one particular late afternoon there was only a small strip left over to plough, so he ordered the native boys to continue ploughing and told the voorloper “Simon” to take his place in front of the span of oxen as usual.

To their astonishment the oxen had other ideas, and simply pushed him along out of the land in their eagerness, apparently insisting that their days work was done!

All concerned were most amused by this intelligence shown by the animals, so it was decided that the oxen should have their way and the extra ploughing could be completed the following day.

My Grandfather, William Jennings, owned a splendid span of pure black oxen which were the pride of his heart when farming “Nooitgedacht” during earlier days.

Later after many years it seemed quite a coincidence that my Uncle George Hinds who lived there too should have a remarkable span of oxen with regard to their colour as well. All being black with “bles” faces.

They were a pretty sight to watch or meet along the roads, trekking along inspanned to a wagon – or on their way to work at the lands.

CHAPTER 28

WORK AND HAPPY EVENTS IN OUR LIVES

The harvesting of crops at this time of our lives was all done by hand with native labour. The servants of the farm, men, women and those of their families who were capable of handling a sickle, were all expected to offer their services, and set to work to reap the ripening crops of wheat and forage which were ready to be harvested.

Extra labour was employed as well. Native girls came regularly in great numbers from far distant kraals which were situated on the other side of the Magaliesburg Mountain from where Nooitgedacht is.

Farmers throughout the valley of Hekpoort, as well as ourselves, were greatly dependant of their help. This they knew, and often traded on it, staging a "strike" for higher wages whenever they were so inclined! There was no alternative but to consent to their demands, as the crops were at stake and too valuable to sacrifice for the sake of the extra wages. When the wheat or oats was reaped and bundled the next step was that of "Stack Building". Only certain native boys were reliable in the art of doing this satisfactory.

The stacks had to be constructed in such a way that rain and bad weather would not damage the bundles excessively.

Threshing machines were often not available for a number of weeks afterwards, it was an anxious time awaiting their arrival.

Threshing days were exciting, the native women were useful on these days as well. It seemed a "Hive of activity" feeding the machine with the bundles of grain, then filling up the bags, and weighing and sewing up the bags in readiness for loading on the ox wagons for delivery to the Stores for safety. In later years we were able to purchase a Harvesting Machine which simplified matters a great deal.

Nowadays a "Combine" is used and harvesting is done very speedily and is indeed a "boon and blessing" to farmers. What a time saver and labour saver, they proof to be compared with earlier days.

My cousin Frances Hinds' marriage to Lydford Bartlett was celebrated at the old Homestead at Nooitgedacht on the 4th April 1923.

The youngest, and only one of the family still with her parents would be leaving the Transvaal to live on a farm near Tylden, Cape Province. They had a lovely wedding and "Nooitgedacht" was once again "en fete" for the happy pair and all their guests thoroughly enjoyed themselves. I could not help feeling waves of emotion at the thought of "Fan" as we always named her, going so far away, although I felt sure of their happiness. We had so much girlhood happiness together, and I simply could not picture "Nooitgedacht" without her!

It was during the year 1928 that we decided to make a start with Poultry farming as a source of livelihood.

The first pen of white Leghorns of the Porritt strain were purchased, and we were very satisfied and pleased with them.

It was uphill work at first getting established and there were many snags and disappointments often due to inexperience.

Gradually our stock increased and the industry became more attractive.

Step by step we tried to improve conditions and facilities for the poultry. The rearing of chicks under primitive conditions was not easy, anyhow with stout courage we carried on and proved that it was the right thing to do, as time went on we learned by experience.

Reading Betty Macdonald's "The Egg and I" describes so exactly what we, as beginners, experienced. I used to read it aloud to my mother and we found the story so amusing, often comparing ourselves in similarity to her experiences!

Anyhow it was great fun, and so interesting, I can even prove that even a fowl has "individuality"!

When collecting the eggs each day there was one particular hen who would meet me at the door of the hen house, and follow me all the time while inside gathering the eggs into the basket, then escort me back to the door before she would once again mingle with the other birds.

There was one of the Roosters who delighted in kicking me! He must have been very well satisfied one day when I kneeled down to get an egg which had been dropped under one of the perches and he succeeded in giving me a good wack on my head which drew blood most profusely!

Another rather frightening incident happened in those days when I was pulling my weight by helping with the poultry regularly each day. My husband and I were together and there had been a suspicion that a "Ringhals" snake was about in the hen houses! On a nest one of the hens was sitting and we discovered to our horror that the snake was sharing it with her! No time was lost before Collin had killed it with a substantial stick he fortunately had with him!

There was always a dread amongst the farmers of locust swarms devouring their crops and grazing at this particular period.

A whole seasons work could be devastated within a couple of hours by these creatures.

The locusts came in swarms, and could be seen in flight for miles before they arrived, at times the swarms were so immense they appeared to over-shadow the sun.

When they arrived on the farm, every available servant, young and old included, joined forces in an attempt to prevent the locust from settling.

If this happened and they remained overnight, not much was left the following day, as they do not move again before the day is well advanced and warm. This encourages these creatures to fly off seeking fresh pastures to devour. The Government took

steps to eradicate the locusts by spraying them with poison and men were hired to carry out this work, being some local farmers. In one of our cattle camps a tin of this "Locust poison" was upset unbeknown to us! Had my husband been advised of the unfortunate happening great animal loss might have been avoided as the cattle would have been removed from dangerous grazing. The consequence was, the following day, practically the cream of our heard of cattle were dead! Being palatable with the sweetness of sugar, the poison was relished by them. It was a day of sadness to us. Nine motherless calves had to be hand reared.

Eventually compensation was paid for the loss, but it could not make up for the break in the heard which had taken years to build up. One other experience which stand out clearly in my memory of "happenings" on the farm was that of a cloudburst during the night. 9.00 Inches of rain was registered the following morning!

Rain tumbled down in torrents, and with the terrific noise it was not easy to carry on a conversation in the house! Everything was swamped! What a loss of poultry was to greet us the following day.

Young pullets had been transferred that day to other sleeping quarters, and they were perched on perches not very high off ground level. The water swamped the building and most of the young birds were drowned!

Parts of the surrounding valley looked like a lake, and extensive damage generally was experienced in the locality.

News of washaways came from all quarters, roads were impassable and bridges across the rivers were taken with the flood waters. The mare "Lassie" I mentioned previously had produced a lovely foal, a dapple roan in colour and we promptly named him "Laddie".

He was a real pet to all the family especially after he lost his mother from the much dreaded horse sickness of those days.

When Laddie had grown into a nice little pony he used to graze about in the yard around the home, nibbling at anything else he fancied as well, and he became particularly tame in consequence, getting a cheery word from whoever passed him. My surprise and alarm knew no bounds one morning when I found he was inside our large bedroom which had a double glass door leading onto the side verandah of our home.

I decided my best procedure would be to quietly retrace my steps without uttering any exclamation, and just hope for the best!

I listened, and watched intently from a distance, wondering what Laddie's next move would be. After a while he walked out of the room, and all was well without further ado.

What a riot and damage might have been experienced had he been frightened while indoors! We all had a good laugh about Laddie's escapade, and wondered if he saw himself in the Wardrobe mirror and was well satisfied with his likeness.

By this time our family consisted of four children. Joyce Mary our only daughter and second child arrived on the 30th August 1923, which happened to be the anniversary of my Father's birthday, so he was thrilled about the baby. Then, some years later, on the 21st January 1927, our second son, Alan Eric, was born. Very fair with blue eyes. My father affectionately always said in later years he was our "little helper" and mother's pet name for him was "Dickie Boy".

Our youngest son, John Clifford's birthday was the same date as his eldest brother Errol's, only 11 years later, being the 4th September 1931.

As we were considering what his name should be my mother remarked "why not call him "John" as all the men I have known with that name are good men". So that decided the choice. "Clifford" was my mother's first name. We were, I suppose as most parents are, so happy with our little family and our lives were very full, planning and working, as best we could for the future. I know that the children were a joy to my parents and aged Grandmother too.

After an illness of a few months (on March 30th 1929) my Grandmother was taken from us to a higher calling at the age of 88 years. She was buried on "Easter Day" of that year at "Nooitgedacht". A life unselfishly spent for others. Her grave is next to that of her husband to whom she was devoted, both buried on the farm to which they came full of strength and rich in their love for each other with the ambitions of youth in 1871.

As our family grew to school going age they all attended the Hekpoort Government School having to travel the distance of 4 miles by horse drawn vehicles, generally.

There were no bridges across the "Doornspruit" and "Magalies" Rivers in those days, and the sudden summer thunderstorms with heavy rains were quite frequent.

We used to anxiously watch the sky when a storm was threatening as the rivers became flooded easily, and often were impassable within a few hours.

At times the children were allowed to leave school early, if their teachers thought it advisable, otherwise arrangements were hurriedly made to fetch them safely home by car before the storm!

The Principal, Mr. Jones, was an excellent teacher who studied his pupils and seemed to know what they were capable of achieving with their studies. He and Mrs. Jones with their large, happy family, lived in the School residence adjoining the Hekpoort School, and were kind friends to us. Once a year Mr. Jones arranged a "Picnic" for his pupils. It was always held at the same spot where a level roadway was available, and the teachers arranged "races" for their pupils of the different age groups, and other sports.

Parents generally all attended, arriving by ox wagon and horse carts, and the "Get together" was enjoyed by all. Cold lunch was being provided under the shade of the lovely indigenous trees! A stream of clear water surrounded by rocky formation, with a background of mountain with exceptionally pretty krantzies completed the setting of some well remembered days. Here at "The Fountains", "Nooitgedacht", we had a nice Tennis Court, and it afforded a great deal of pleasure to ourselves and growing family and relatives and friends who often joined us in the game.

We in turn visited and played tennis at our friends' courts, often arranging tournaments in Krugersdorp, and going together in Parties. In this way we lived finding pleasure and enjoyment in our nearby surroundings, which held so much for us all.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE NATIVE NAMES AS GIVEN TO MEMBERS OF OUR FAMILY AND MRS HECKFORD BY SERVANTS ON THE FARM "NOOITGEDACHT"

MMANKO	NOSE	MARY JENNINGS (NEE REIKEN)
MMAMOLELE	TALL	CLIFFORD AUGUSTA HINDS (NEE JENNINGS)
KGWALLANE	QUICK OF MOVEMENT	HARRY CLEMENT HINDS
MMAMOKHUTSWANE	SHORT	SARAH HANNAH MAUD HINDS (NEE JENNINGS)
PHANGKGANE		GOERGE WILLIAM HINDS
MAKOLEKOLE	WALKING WITH A LIMP	MRS SARAH HECKFORD
MAMUSAGIANA	N. TVL NATIVE NAME	" " "
MMANAKA	MORNING STARE	MARY DE VILLIERS LATER CAREY (NEE HINDS)
KHONONO	ENOUGH	ARTHUR FERDERICK HARDY CAREY
RAMPHAKA	KNIFE	JAMES RODERICK MAVOR
RADIMPE	STOUT	COLLIN SMITH SANDERS
MMANTSHEANE	SLIGHT	MURIEL HECKFORD SANDERS (NEE HINDS)
MAPHUME	FULL OF VIGOUR	ERROL COLLIN SANDERS
MMABONTLE	PRETTY	JOYCE MARY SANDERS
MATSOSA	WAKE UP	ALAN ERIC SANDERS
SECOMBER	LEATHER COAT	JOHN CLIFFORD SANDERS
SESI	SISTER	DIANA MARGARET SANDERS

CHAPTER 29

THE HEKPOORT VALLEY

Hekpoort is a small village situated in a lovely valley with the Magaliesburg and Witwatersrand mountain ranges on either side of it.

The Magalies River and “Doornspruit” provide its main water supply, although since the droughts farmers have resorted to boreholes, and in many instances have had exceptional underground water to use for irrigation and other purposes. Hekpoort has a farming community, and crops such as wheat, mealies, tobacco and groundnuts are grown. Fruit trees are favoured and have been planted extensively.

During the last few years a fair amount of vegetables are also cultivated and marketed. The patchwork appearance of crops during the summer and winter seasons gives an attraction particularly pleasing to the passer by.

There are large Poultry plants, Piggeries, and a fair amount of stock to be seen in the valley. Also large nurseries which grow everything required for the local markets and public, as well as catering for overseas markets.

Tobacco has been extensively grown, and prices for the good quality product have been attractive. I feel it has been responsible for many a poor farmer to enjoy better facilities with the convenience of a small truck or motor car which previously was impossible for their comfort.

It has been interesting and satisfying to have watched the progress of the farming community generally throughout my lifetime at “Nooitgedacht”. Improvement in Farming activities is most likely due to advanced methods and mechanization which has speeded up the work on farms.

During earlier days farmers worked hard and were assisted in many ways by their women folk, but I fear it was a struggle generally to make ends meet.

The first Post Office I can remember at Hekpoort was a room which served the purpose at the Police Station. Mail bags were delivered by a Cape Cart drawn by two horses, the Postman being a local farmer, a Mr. du Toit. The delivery was made twice weekly on Tuesdays and Fridays. Later there was a small room adjoining one of the General Dealer Stores used for a short while. Afterwards a Post Office named “Foothills” was established opposite the Government School, but was closed down when a more up to date building, 2 ½ miles to the east, was made available which is now in use named “Hekpoort Post Office”.

This now serves a large area of the valley and has an efficient staff with combining Telegraph Exchange with a Day and Night service available to subscribers.

Our Telephone “Party line” and exchange dates back to the year 1928.

The Railway line which runs through the Valley from Pretoria to Magaliesburg has been here over 50 years having been constructed during the 1920 period.

According to records kindly given to me by the present Principal, Mr. J.J. Van Vuuren of Hekpoort Primary School, the first known date which is definitely established by research work done, of a school having been opened at Hekpoort is as far back as January 1885. The following notes are extracts from the School registers which I am indebted to Mr. Van Vuuren for, with thanks.

- 15.04.1886: Teacher Mr. P.G.W. Du Plessis did an Inspection at the Hekpoort school, 1 year and 3 months after its duration. He found the building was inadequate being too small, and light was insufficient and there was no blackboard. Registration of pupils was 36. These were grouped into 3 classes.
- 1904: A school building was occupied for use although unfinished. Signed Harry Jas. Freeman, District Headmaster.
- 04.11.1904: One fourth of the School roof was blown off during the night in a terrible storm.
- 24.01.1905: Entries show that on this date 3 schools at Hekpoort united. Pupils living great distances from the School, and there was a marked drop in attendance.
- 15.02.1905: A clock was installed at the Hekpoort School which was welcomed.
- 01.03.1905: No school attendance on account of rain.
- 02.03.1905: An application for Transport was accepted by the Government.
- 06.03.1905: The wagon brought the first load of children registering 36 pupils.
- 02.08.1905: School committee received tender for conveyance of children from Hartebeestfontein.
- 03.10.1905: A new transport wagon with a tent in use.
- 07.12.1905: Lord Selborne visited the School and after the "National anthem" was sung an address was read to him by one of the boys.
- 04.06.1908: A Tennis Court is being erected at the School.
- 25.06.1908: A concert was given by the pupils at the School last night to raise money for the Tennis Court. It was well attended and the sum of £4.3.6. was realised which amount covers expenses incurred.
- 05.09.1908: A School Concert was held which realised the sum of £4.12.6., this amount is to be devoted to the purchase of a Piano for School use.
- 29.10.1909: Mr. N. Grobler and Miss L. Hoffman leave as school closes for usual holiday.
- 06.10.1909: Mr. A.H. Jones assumed duties as Principal of the Hekpoort School. Miss Theunissen is second Assistant Teacher, School reopened with 21 Pupils present. Closed today Friday with 32 present. Absence of 13 pupils due to Whooping Cough. Miss Medhurst the first assistant teacher kept an inventory of all stock in her classroom.

To my knowledge in the earlier days of the School a Miss Edinborough was also one of the teachers. She boarded with an Aunt of mine, Mrs. Walter Jennings.

Miss Jeannette Cloete joined the School staff as teacher, this being her first post during the year 1911. Later she married Albert Jennings, son of Alfred and Ida Jennings. She continued her career throughout the years, teaching later at various schools until retirement. She has lived at Hekpoort all her life being one of the oldest residents at present.

Our three sons and daughter, and now our Grandchildren, all had the advantage of attending the Hekpoort Government School before furthering their studies elsewhere. At present, School buses are run each day and come to “Nooitgedacht” en route, transporting pupils of the farm, a much appreciated service.

The Anglican Church “St. Annes” is situated near the School at Hekpoort. The Foundation stone of this building was laid by my Great Aunt Anne Jennings, wife of Jeremiah Jennings. The date being 6th December 1930. The members of the congregation were pleased to know that at last Hekpoort was to have a Church, after a great deal of hard work and organisation by all interested. At this particular period my husband, Collin Sanders, was Chairman of the Church Committee. The Community at present have two Services a month, one an Anglican, and the other a Methodist, the Minister coming from Krugersdorp. General Dealers Stores provide Hekpoort inhabitants with most of their requirements. Children, together with their parents, can enjoy ice cream, cool drinks, etc. at their pleasure!



Rev. Killick conducting service of Laying of Foundation Stone of St. Anne's Anglican Church, Hekpoort on the 6th December 1930 by Mrs Elizabeth Anne Jennings (seen standing with sunshade). Harry Hinds (author's father) on left in light suit, Sergt Lea next to Rev. Killick.

A Professor friend of ours who often visited us, years ago once said, “I do hope Ice Cream carts may never find their way to “Nooitgedacht”, it would spoil it”. When this remark was made it did seem improbable! Anyhow, years afterwards, I was amused to see a Bantu Ice Cream salesman with his cart making his way along the road on the farm trying his luck at selling his wares to the Piccanins and others at Nooitgedacht! His venture proofed unprofitable as the practice was discontinued!

Hekpoort boasts a very nice “Social Club” and lately this has been attractively enlarged to accommodate for various functions held there. Members and the Community generally were indebted to the late Lady Oppenheimer and Sir Ernest of “Blue Bird” Farm for their kind gesture of generosity which made it possible to build and furnish the club in the first instance.

Tennis Courts on the grounds afford the Sport loving community Social enjoyment regularly twice a week. Tournaments are arranged and teams entertained. All facilities being handy at the Club for the serving of refreshments. The committee is an active one. This "Sports" property was donated to the Hekpoort Public for that purpose by the firm of Howard, Pim and Hardy at the time Hekpoort was surveyed and divided into its individual owners the date of which I am uncertain of. A Bowling Green is provided for bowling enthusiast in the locality by the owners of "Carls Krona Guest House", Mr. and Mrs. Lance Carlsson-Smith.

One feels that Hekpoort has indeed "Grown up" throughout the years and is a very pleasant place to live in.

For many there are happy memories of the past, and assured bright hopes for the future. Escom power is used throughout the Hekpoort Valley and adjoining farms so the community enjoy every possible facility for their convenience, and looking back on the past years great progress has been made which I hope may continue for all time.

CHAPTER 30

THE WHEELS OF TIME

There had been changes and various exciting happenings for my Uncle George and Aunt Sarah of “Nooitgedacht” as the years rolled by.

Their eldest married daughter, Gladys, and her husband, Roddy, with their two children, Donald and Vera, had moved from their farm “Diggers Rest” in the Northern Transvaal and were now resident and farming at Hekpoort.

It was hear that their family was increased by another son born on the 6th June, 1920, and he was named “George Roderick Mavor” after his Grandfather and father.

Then followed quite a number of Grandchildren for George and Sarah Hinds who was known better to all the family as “Tiny”, the nickname given her as a small child!

Their second daughter, Mary de Villiers, had a baby daughter on the 8th May 1921.

I shall always remember my first glimpse of “Mary Winifred” with her mother. It reminded me of a beautiful picture I had seen of “The Madonna and Child” which had impressed me. At “Nooitgedacht” itself, my cousins Willie and Enid Hinds, had become the happy parents of a very fair little daughter. “Daphne Ada” had arrived on the 23rd April 1922, and once again there was a little “Miss Hinds” of the fourth generation on the farm, and she brought joy to her ageing Grandparents as well. They were still living in the old home not far distant to the new one their son Will had built before his marriage. So with our young family at “The Fountains” we were all kept busy and entertained with our “Little people” in the various homes and in the nearby vicinity of Hekpoort. We looked forward to visiting each other whenever opportunity offered to exchange our family happenings.

Down at Tylden, Cape Province, Frances and Lydford Bartlett had the proverbial “Pigeon Pair”. Gerald Hinds Bartlett having been born on the 23rd December 1924, and Gladys Maud Bartlett who followed some years later on the 29th June, 1928.

Amidst all these glad happenings the family were struck severely by the sudden death of my cousin, Gladys Mavor, on the 18th September, 1924. Less than four months afterwards her sister, Mary de Villiers, was bereaved of her husband Aubrey on the 21st January, 1925.

The years that followed were not easy. Mary de Villiers with her young daughter returned to the home of her youth and once again lived with her parents. She was a comfort to them in their declining years as they were to her and Molly her daughter.

When Molly was old enough for schooling she had a governess named Mrs. Langridge, to teach her, who was a kind friend to us all.

Willie and Enid with their daughter, Daphne, had left “Nooitgedacht” and were farming at the coast near Morgan Bay, Cape Province. My Uncle George Hinds developed a serious illness from which he did not recover, and once again “Nooitgedacht” was without a Master, and my widowed Aunt and her daughter Mary, had to shoulder the supervision of farming operations. Mary de Villiers remarried on

the 28th October, 1933. Her husband, Arthur Carey, had been a friend of the family since his boyhood, and we rejoiced with them at their happiness. In our own home we had been bereaved of my Father Harry Hinds, only two weeks before this marriage took place.

It was with feelings of great sorrow and joy, in our hearts, that we attended the Ceremony and Celebrations of the Wedding day!

It was a satisfaction to know that the old homestead at "Nooitgedacht" once more had a young married couple in it, and that my Aunt Sarah had their protection and companionship in the "Autumn" of her widowhood. On 22nd December, 1934, a lovely baby daughter, Sarah Joan, was born to the Careys. I was chosen to be one of her Godmothers. Joan was a child full of life and energy, and once again there was the welcome "pitter patter" of little feet to be heard in the home which had sheltered so many other children in former years. Life at this stage went on very peacefully, and happily in both the homes at "Nooitgedacht" and "Fountains Nooitgedacht.

We were young married couples with our growing children to provide for, and Mary Carey and I, both had the comfort and experience of our own mothers who were so helpful, gradually we took over the responsibilities they had, and I hope, made their lives easier in the "Autumn" of the remaining years of their lives. My Aunt Sarah was taken from us first. The date of her death being 15th May 1935 after suffering a serious illness. A woman of strong character and capabilities, with an amusing sense of humour, which she inherited from her father "William Jennings" I fancy. Lovely long thick hair was indeed the proverbial "Glory" for her, which she coiled simply at the nape of her neck, and retained throughout her life. I always felt she loved me, and naturally I responded to this affection in the same way. She was my Godmother. My own dear Mother lived to a good old age, reaching her 89th year, and during that year she was present at our eldest, and youngest son's marriages. Frail, during those last years of her life, but always showing a wonderful spirit of endurance and gratitude, and interest in her family, and surroundings, she had a strong character, with a true sense of honour, and independency was certainly one of the qualities of her nature. She was artistic, being able to do meticulous hand painting during her younger life, particularly expressing herself in water colour paintings of wild flowers. She was also an accomplished pianist. Having these gifts, gave her much pleasure and interest throughout her long life. To me she was a "Mother" in every sense of the word.

I am honoured to have had her quiet gentle confidence, example, love and care for so many years of my life.

CHAPTER 31

LURE OF THE MAGALIESBURG MOUNTAIN

The Magaliesburg Mountain Range is very picturesque. “Nooitgedacht” with the majesty of the highest peak as its background is given this added beauty.

The height of this peak being 6,078 ft. above sea level. One section of the “Krantz” or Precipice is known as the “Cathedral Block”, and I have a newspaper photograph of the “Bishop’s Mitre” being climbed by a mountaineer!

Some successful ascents to some of the dangerous peaks of the Magaliesburg Mountain on our farm have been achieved at various times by men belonging to a Mountaineering Club.

One man moves at a time during these climbs and with the use of safety ropes each man in turn is brought to the level of the one ahead so bringing them to their desired height or ambition.

Troops of baboons, and the familiar “Blue Apes” are frequently to be seen enjoying the freedom and seclusion the mountain affords them, also providing them with their means of livelihood in the form of the various wild fruits to be found, and the numerous insects they feast on at leisure. At times, they become most daring, visiting the farm fruit orchards and mealie lands, causing much havoc and destruction wherever they choose to go!

It is an amusing sight to watch the stealthy and cunning method of their approach to their intended plundering, and then the hurried display of helping themselves to whatever eatable product is available, being the desire of their “curiosity and avarice”. Then follows a hurried scamper away to safety and privacy. The baboons generally have as their leader a large male of forbidding and rather frightening appearance.

The rest of the troop follows, and a female with her baby perched on her back is a familiar sight. The females and their young are always protected by the stronger sex.

It is interesting to note that a male baboon or two also form the last of a plundering troop as well. An incident well remembered happened during my girlhood at “The Fountains”, Nooitgedacht. The Blue Apes had been making a nuisance of themselves at this particular time, and although having been repeatedly frightened, daringly returned again.

There were a few orange trees bearing luscious fruit on the side of our homestead at the time. It was a Monday afternoon, and an old native wash woman had finished her day’s work, and was on her way home, and when passing these trees she noticed a few of the oranges on the ground. She promptly picked them up, then suddenly some more of the fruit tumbled from the tree. Imagine her surprise and dismay on looking up to find there were some Blue Apes in the orange tree, devouring what they could, and having supplied her with some as well to take home! Another instance of “monkey cleverness” was displayed with some mealies my husband had stored “on the cob” in a store not far from our home which has a ravine

with background of trees. The door of the building was not very secure, enabling the apes to get in to the mealies and help themselves which they discovered by curiosity. When alarmed by any noise they would scuttle away with their loot, climbing up to the top of the steep gabled roof and sit their eating mealies to their hearts content. It seemed so ingenious of them to do this, that frequently we just left them to enjoy their sport, instead of frightening them away, or doing away with the apes by shooting them!

At times "Leopard" have been seen on the "Nooitgedacht" mountains, and also on other parts along the Magaliesburg Mountain Range, and lower down in the Valley of Hekpoort, near the Witwatersrand Mountains.

Many long years ago, my father, Harry Hinds, was riding on horseback up a bridle path leading to the top of the Magaliesburg Mountain. He used to tell us laughingly of his frightening experience on seeing one of these animals crouching in the thick bush not far distant from where he was travelling. He said he happened to be smoking his "much loved pipe" at the time, and it simply fell from his mouth when finding he was at such close quarters with the leopard without defence of any sort!

Anyhow, it allowed him to ride on in fear and trembling, without the slightest disturbance much to his relief and astonishment!

The incident was always a standing joke against my Father afterwards! We never knew there were hyena in these parts until several years ago. There was evidence that they prowled about at night near the Cattle Kraals not far from the house.

To my knowledge three of these animals have been killed at different times on the farm, and there have been suspicions that they have been about since. I might mention that quite recently, one of the servants of the farm had occasion to visit relatives at Buffelspoort, and walked the distance following the foot path leading over the Magaliesburg mountain.

When he reached a certain place familiar to us all, as there is a large white stone there, he was amazed and terrified to see no less than three leopard lying down in the bush nearby. Naturally he "took to his heels" as the saying goes as swiftly as possible so lived to tell the tale!

Buck of various species are to be seen at times, the largest of these being "Ribbuck" I fancy. They are undisturbed by hunters at "Nooitgedacht" and allowed to roam about their haunts at leisure, but I fear a fair percentage of their young are devoured by stray leopard, and their other enemies of the wilds, especially jackals, which are numerous, and are often seen during the day time either singly or in pairs, on the farm.

"Protea" are still plentiful on the Magaliesburg Mountain, but as far I only know of two varieties. The ordinary pink type, and a much smaller creamy white, both are pretty. Mimosa and Acacia thorn trees are plentiful, as are so many other indigenous trees of the Transvaal which vary considerably in beauty. A very marked encroachment of tree is noticeable throughout the past years on the mountain, and surroundings. This is very evident on comparing photographs taken earlier which show a background of the Magaliesburg at other times.

Veld fires do destroy a great number of the young growth. An effort has always been made to control these, if possible, by our family. Almost every year without fail during the winter months, these devastating fires spring up unexpectedly.

The culprit responsible for setting them alight escapes free of punishment generally, causing great loss of valuable veld grazing which has been preserved for stock very often. The hard working farmers have to battle with all their labourers and fire fighting equipment to put out the raging flames of destruction, at times working far into the night before being satisfied that all is well!

It has been proved here at "Nooitgedacht" that the water courses definitely weaken in consequence of persistent veld fires.

One can well imagine how terrified all wild life "big and small" became when flames of fire come leaping upon them. Many are tortured and wounded by burns, and others fall by the wayside in their frantic rush to reach safer quarters.

The Magaliesburg Mountains offered excellent coverage and protection for the band of Boer Burghers during the "Guerrilla" Warfare of the Anglo Boer War. Many of these men were so familiar with the neighbourhood of their activities, and the natural camouflage was a great advantage to them.

I have always had a great love for this mountain range, with so much hidden beauty and secrets, forever untold. They seem to give security and protection in some unknown way to me, having grown up next to them from my childhood.

So much is hidden from view. Less than a mile up from our homestead, a pretty "waterfall" is concealed, revealing much attraction in its serene setting. One has to pick an entrance through the bush and dense undergrowth, to come upon it. When water was plentiful and gushed down over the high precipice rocks, it was a sight well worth seeing, with ferns in variety growing along the sides. A pool of clear icy cold water at the foot completed the picture well remembered. Later, when droughts were being felt on the farm, it was decided to deviate the stream of water from this natural flow over the rocks and piping was laid from the top of the Waterfall which conveyed the supply of water without wastage to the homesteads and farmyards for domestic, stock, and poultry use and irrigation.

As time goes on, these Magaliesburg Mountains will continue to hold mysteries untold, and I hope our "little section" of it may be preserved with all its beauty and wild life for many of our family to enjoy throughout the years.

The pleasure they have given me is immeasurable during my life under their sheltering protection.

CHAPTER 32**THE YOUNGER GENERATION AND WEDDING BELLS RE-ECHOED**

After our three sons Errol, Alan and John left the Government School at Hekpoort each one in turn went to the “Boys High School” at Pretoria, to further their studies. It was a happy experience for them being scholars in a large school with the companionship of so many other boys, and where they were able to enter into the excitement of various sport activities.

All three of the boys played rugby, and were able to take part in athletic events. It was a “red letter” day for my husband and me when we were able to attend a “Sports day” at the “Boys High School”, Pretoria.

I would pack a picnic basket and we would be off by car to Pretoria, a distance of 54 miles to the school. Often my mother would accompany us, in anticipation of seeing our sons compete in the various events they had entered for.

Errol, the eldest, by quite a few years, had already left school before Alan and John were there together. He spent a year at Wits. University at Johannesburg, doing the first year Medical Course, and used to board at “Fran Kenwald Research Station” travelling the distance to University by motorbike each day. The next year he was back at Pretoria attending lectures at University for the duration of the necessary “Animal Husbandry Course” and specialised in Poultry, attaining the degree of B.Sc. Agriculture. After this, Errol was on the staff at Glen, Cedara, and Potchefstroom Colleges. Later he was a Technical Advisor to National Feeds Ltd. Johannesburg, and was able to spend his weekends at home. Being of farming stock and having a love for the life to which they had been accustomed, our sons came back to their home farm at “Fountains” Nooitgedacht, and at this stage our hopes for their happiness and success seemed complete. Alan, our second son, previous to settling permanently, also had a billet with National Feeds Ltd. Johannesburg, for some time.

He was the first of the family to marry, his bride being Margaret Doreen van der Merwe, of “Armadene” Johannesburg.

Their wedding ceremony took place at the Methodist Church at Turffontein, Johannesburg, on the 6th December 1952.

Alan and Peggy have their home near to the old homestead in which I have lived all my life, their nearness has been a comfort to us throughout the past years.

A few years later the family history of two brothers marrying sisters was once again repeated, when Errol our eldest son was married to Shirley vd Merwe on April 27th, 1957. Also at the Methodist Church at Turffontein, Johannesburg.

John, our youngest son’s wedding took place less than two months afterwards on the 8th June, 1957. His bride was Alta Singleton of Hekpoort.

Their marriage was solemnised at St. Anne’s Church, Hekpoort, at which Church, John had been christened.

This Baptismal Service was the first to be held in the Anglican Church mentioned after its completion during the year 1931, on December, 13th.

Only two month's after John and Alta's marriage our dear Mother and Gran passed away peacefully at home on 8th August 1957.

She was buried next to my late Father at St. Anne's Church Cemetery, a wish she had expressed before her death. Her life stands out clearly to us as a fine example of Character, quiet patience and courage. She was known to our native servants throughout her life by the name "Mamolelle" which I am given to understand means "Being Tall".

At the early age of 12 years our dear daughter, Joyce< developed the disease of Epilepsy. I will not dwell on this, except to say that all that was possible medically by numerous specialists and doctors was done for her with little benefit.

For 16 years afterwards she was able to stay with us at home.

Joyce had the makings of a fine woman showing talent in Art, Fancywork, and accomplishments of various kinds during this time of her life.

Eventually doctors thought it advisable that she should take up residence at an Institution.

She spent 11 long years at Sterkfontein Hospital during which time she suffered a "Paralytic Stroke" and was a complete invalid until her death at the age of 40 years on the 11th June 1964.

CHAPTER 33**NOOITGEDACHT MODERNISED**

Eventually John, and afterwards Errol built their homes on the farm “Nooitgedacht”. Each of the three sons and their wives’ homes have command of a lovely view of the Magaliesburg and Witwatersberg Mountain Ranges, with the beautiful valley and its patchwork of farms showing the homesteads and lands of various colouring according to the crops grown, with all the surrounding country side. Indeed a panoramic view!

It was a comforting thought to know that they were all happily married and settled in their respective homes and to feel the nearness of our whole family all on the farm “Nooitgedacht”. At this particular time there were seven Grandchildren, each one being equally precious to my husband and me, only two girls amongst them! It would seem that the name “Sanders” will carry on for many generations to come! During these years the drought had been excessively acute and was being felt by us all. Boreholes for water were being sunk by each of our three sons wherever it was thought likely of striking an underground supply.

A great number proved disappointing and entailed a great deal of expense. Fortunately some gave good water and have maintained their supply and are valuable assets to the farm now.

Tractors years ago took the place of oxen for ploughing agricultural work and various other farm work in general is all more speedily done by modern mechanised methods.

Now “Nooitgedacht” is electrically equipped with ESCOM power. This great advantage and convenience is immeasurable, as besides the lighting of buildings it is used extensively for all purposes, so varied and essential for the means of livelihood for general farming, poultry plants and piggeries. It seemed that our dreams and hopes for Errol, Alan and John, with their families, had all come true.

They all had their own particular section of work and business with stock, poultry and agriculture independently organised. Errol eventually decided to take a post offered to him by the Animal Husbandry Department, Pretoria.

He started work on the 1st September 1964. The Technical work interested him, and he felt it would prove beneficial to him to have the extra financial help. His work took him at this particular time to various parts of the country amongst cattle farmers who had applied to the GOVERNMENT FOR THE “Stock Improvement Scheme”. Errol was able to spend weekends at home with his wife and young family fortunately. It was on a journey in connection with this work that he met his death in a serious road accident on the 26th February 1965.

This tragedy has in consequence changed the pattern of so many lives. A young son was born to his wife, Shirley, on the 10th April, 1965, who bears his fathers’ name of “Errol Collin”.

I bring this family story of ours to a close, the future all unknown, but with the hope that we may all be endowed with the courage of our Forbears for whatever it holds in

store for us, and with the wish that the inheritance of “Nooitgedacht” to our dear sons may be to them, their wives, and our eight Grandchildren a great blessing, bringing success, and a full measure of happiness, with all that makes life worth while to them all.

Collin, my husband and I cherish a secret hope that the farm “Nooitgedacht” may continue to belong, from one generation to another, and not pass from the family after the ownership of over one hundred years!

The date of the century having been reached on the 8th September, 1971.

From the past we now look to the future in “Confidence and Faith”.



The old homestead at “Fountains” Nooitgedacht, built for Harry and Augusta Hinds (nee Jennings), “Home” to them throughout their lives, and later to Collin and Muriel Sanders (nee Hinds), where their family Errol, Joyce, Alan and John were born and grew up.